On Stone by P. J. Hamerton W. R. Ryan, del. Vetchum & Co lith Adam St. Strand.

THE PRINCIPAL STREET OF SAN FRANCISCO.

PERSONAL ADVENTURES

IN

UPPER AND LOWER CALIFORNIA.

ILLUSTRATED BY TWENTY-THREE DRAWINGS
TAKEN ON THE SPOT.

BY WILLIAM REDMOND RYAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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Checked

PREFACE.

The following sketches were not originally intended to meet the public eye, having been hastily thrown off for the amusement of the writer's family in England; and now, if in yielding to the earnest and repeated solicitations of perhaps over-zealous and too partial friends, he should subject himself to the charge of temerity, by giving them a more extended circulation, he trusts that some indulgence will be shown him, on the ground that the scenes he describes have excited more than a passing interest in the public mind, and that little has as yet been published that is calculated to satisfy it. If time had admitted of it, the Author would have preferred giving the narrative some other form

than that of Personal Adventures, and sinking his own individuality in some more general mode of treating the subject; but again he must ask the reader to bear in mind that the more convenient framework that originally suggested itself was that in which it now appears; and that, when his permission was asked to publish the manuscript, he was at too great a distance to alter its construction.

In explanation of the motives that induced the writer to venture upon so distant an expedition—for they were somewhat different from those that influence the feverish speculations of the present day—it will be sufficient to state that he was one of those restless spirits, who, during the late war between the United States and Mexico, sought relief from the monotony of civilized life, in a more congenial and adventurous existence amidst the wilds and mountains of California. That country had just begun to attract the eager regards of the American democrats, who, appreciating its happy geo-

graphical position, and the advantages to be derived from its fine harbours, could not fail to see in this acquisition another gigantic stride towards the fulfilment of their boasted destiny. The favourable accounts, too, which had been recently received, from some few writers and travellers, of its capabilities for agricultural as well as for commercial purposes, tended in no small degree to inflame the general desire to add this "bright particular star" to the national constellation. The author must confess to his not having been altogether uninfluenced by the latter feeling, so thoroughly does a lengthened residence in the States imbue a foreigner with the prevailing spirit of the people; while his tastes as an artist were no less excited by the glowing descriptions that had been received of the sunny skies and genial atmosphere of this new-born Italy. He longed for the warmth and brightness of a tropical climate, and hoped that, even a few degrees further north, on the Pacific side, he might experience an improvement

in the general state of his health and spirits, which had been greatly impaired by the sedentary and unwholesome nature of the pursuits in which he had been engaged.

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PERSONAL ADVENTURES

IN

UPPER AND LOWER CALIFORNIA.

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There is no career, however humble, which drags its slow length along unmarked by some eventful epoch, whether of joy or grief—some passage in the monotonous routine of an obscure existence, which serves to indicate the long, dull stages of our journey to the grave—

some decisive moment, in short, when the mind, abandoning itself to extremes, rashly compromises the future in the exaggerations of a heated imagination, and embraces at a grasp its chances of good or evil.

Such was the day on which I joined the band of hardy adventurers who had resolved to stake their lives on the conquest and settlement of a region so distant, that even to reach it involved no ordinary amount of peril. I had wound up all my affairs in New York the previous evening, and severed, as I then thought for ever, the many ties that bound me to a place in which I had passed some of the happiest, though, at the same time, some of the most anxious moments of my life. There were few amongst us who cared much as to the chances of our revisiting the scenes we were then quitting; for we were, for the most part, thoroughly sick of the life of large cities, and exaggerated to ourselves the delights of a pastoral existence in a new settlement, in which both climate and soil were supposed to render the allotted duties of man more of a pastime

than a toil. So wisely ordained is it that the imagination should exert a powerful influence over our actions; for were we to be swayed solely by the dictates of what is called common sense, those who are tempted to constitute themselves the pioneers of civilization would never have resolution enough to face the dangers of the forest or wilderness.

* * * *

I arrived at Fort Hamilton in the beginning of June, 1847, and found assembled there nearly the full complement of persons deemed necessary for the expedition. They were, for the most part, composed of intelligent and, in some instances, well-educated young men, dashed, as in all such enterprises, with a sprinkling of the wild and reckless spirits to be found in all the Atlantic cities. This diversity of habits and character was to be expected, from the nature of the service on which we had volunteered; the military portion of it, as in the case of the old Roman colonists, being regarded merely as a period

of probation to qualify us for the enjoyment of our future conquests.

Although fully prepared "to rough it," even in the American sense of the term, our initiation into the hardships of a military career, during a sojourn of several months at the fort, realized, at the outset, our worst anticipations, and there were few amongst us who would not have gladly exchanged for active service in the field the confinement and discomfort that we endured here previous to our embarkation. Between severe and constant drilling, and the most culpable irregularity in the supply of provisions, we had a tolerable foretaste of what we should have to encounter when we came to deal with the sterner realities of a soldier's life. And yet, strange to say, although the previous habits and education of many amongst this motley assemblage of adventurers of different nations but ill adapted them for the privations and dull uniformity of this sort of life, and still less for the close companionship of the uncongenial spirits with whom they were compelled

to associate, there was comparatively but little repining, a general determination seeming to have been arrived at to look at everything under its brightest aspect, and to accept the incidents of our position, distasteful though they might be, in the true spirit of stoicism.

And, after all, there *is* a sunny side to every phase of this much-abused existence of ours. Our life at the fort, although miserable enough, Heaven knows, was not altogether devoid of amusement and instruction to those who are fond of the study of character. As, in the course of the following narrative, I may have occasion to introduce some of my companions to the notice of my readers, some previous acquaintance with their peculiarities may serve to give greater zest to the little episodes in which they play a part.

The butt of the detachment, and general target for the witlings, was a young Swede named Wettermark, who presented in his person a curious compound of the most opposite qualities. Brave as a lion, yet querulous under privations; deeply read, yet simple as a child;

full of genius, yet incapable of turning his abilities to any practical account, he was a notable example of that anomalous mental organization not unfrequently to be met with, in which an extraordinary capacity for absorbing information is conjoined with a lamentable sterility and unfruitfulness—the rich seed sown producing but tares.

Not less curious than the strange jumble of miscellaneous acquirements laid up to rust in the mental storehouse of this eccentric being, were the contents of his compendious kit, the proportions of which had never struck his simple brain to be incompatible with the exigencies of "light marching order," or of rapid evolutions executed in mountainous and hostile regions. His chest, a specimen of the mechanical skill of the "fatherland," and which, without forcing a simile, might not unaptly be compared to a sarcophagus, was crammed to overflowing with the *collectanea* of many industriously spent years. Editions of the classics, the works of Goëthe, Schiller, and Lessing, the novels of Dumas and Madame Dudevant, were

to be seen commingled with Swedish song-books, a silver-mounted flute, and a collection of operatic music, an herbarium, instruments of navigation, carpenters' tools, and, in short, materials for tailoring, tinkering, and executing any sort of mechanical work. To cap the collection, there was a heavy, though short and wide-bored rifle, and a bear-trap, which he had brought with him from Stockholm.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that the proprietor of this curious medley possessed habits of untiring industry; for, when not engaged in reading, he generally occupied himself with some branch or other of the arts, although not precisely those that are generally supposed to be akin to or congenial with literary tastes. To sum up his accomplishments, he could translate the plays of the Greek dramatists, solve a problem in Euclid, play the overture to an opera, manufacture a writing-desk, and—I blush to say it — solder a tin kettle. And yet, of these varied acquirements, the poor fellow had never been able to make a single profitable

investment, his whole career having been marked by one uninterrupted series of failures and mishaps. Desponding in temperament, and, when under the influence of his morbid fancies, querulous as an old woman, his foibles and eccentricities, combined with the difficulty he experienced in expressing himself in English, afforded infinite amusement to those who, gifted with less good nature than a keen perception of the ridiculous, rendered him the incessant butt of their ungenerous witticisms.

Having attempted to sketch the Swede, the portrait would be incomplete without its attendant shadow, Mr. Eugene O'Reilly, a good-hearted fellow in the main, but, like the generality of his countrymen, somewhat addicted to the perpetration of practical jokes — in a word, the Mickey Free of our company. Possessed of an inimitable talent for mimicry, the peculiarities of Wettermark acquired an additional raciness in the imitations of the Irishman, who seemed to hang upon his every accent, and to make him

the one great study of his life. It is impossible to describe the irresistible effect of the manner in which, in the Swede's imperfect English and inflated style of reasoning, he represented him as attempting to reconcile the inconsistency of his admiration for the despotic institutions of Germany with his service of a republic—an anomaly, by the by, not unfrequently to be witnessed now-a-days in men of much greater celebrity than poor Wettermark.

O'Reilly was not without his own weaknesses, the most prominent and inconvenient of which was a rather exaggerated estimate of his vocal powers. Without a note in his voice that could be strained into the execution of the simplest air, and without the slightest ear for music, he was perpetually inflicting upon us his primitive notions of melody. He accepted the roar of laughter with which these displays were usually received, as a testimony of the high degree of appreciation in which we held them; and, indeed, if he had been susceptible enough to divine the truth, I ques-

tion if it would have made any difference to him; for such was his uncontrollable love of mischief and fun, that he would sooner enjoy a little merriment at his own expence than be reduced to a state of inaction for five minutes together. In person he was short, round-featured, and slightly pitted with the small-pox; with an eye that irradiated, by its droll and ever restless expression, an otherwise plain and insignificant face. In short, he was a perfect epitome of Irish virtues and Irish frailties; with a heart that bore rather too large a proportion to the brain; and a vein of humour that rendered him the life and soul of every circle into which he happened to be thrown.

Then we had two disciples of Galen: and, as Nature delights in contrasts, it would be difficult to find two beings more dissimilar in character or appearance. Dr. Freünd was a regularly educated and licensed experimenter on the human frame; while Dr. Judson — Hank Judson, as he was familiarly called — owed the whole of his professional reputation

to a certain talent which he possessed for practising on the credulity of the ignorant, having been engaged in the fabrication of some of those patent panaceas which leave little or nothing to be discovered in the shape of remedial agents.

The German physician was a tall, muscular man, with a most forbidding countenance, to which a pair of enormous moustaches imparted additional fierceness. And yet the husk belied the kernel, for no man could be milder or more inoffensive, except when he came in collision with Judson, to whom he seemed to have a sort of natural as well as professional antipathy. Owing to the effects of a long incarceration, to which he had been subjected for some political offence in his own country, he was liable to nervous attacks of a most distressing nature, under the influence of which his powerful frame became convulsed to such a degree, that the exhaustion which succeeded left him as helpless as an infant.

Judson was a thin, wiry little Yankee, with a face like a hatchet, to which the body

seemed a slender enough handle, so that his whole appearance was suggestive of a metallic sharpness in strict accordance with his other qualities. Take him as you would, you were sure to strike against some angle or another of his character; and you invariably recoiled from the collision with a sensation of pain. In fact, the aggressive principle seemed so instinctive to his malevolent nature, that his very repose was as much to be dreaded as the watchful inaction of some treacherous animal of the feline tribe.

Freünd took but little pains to conceal his contempt and dislike of the quack; and the latter, being afraid to resort to any overt act of retaliation against his formidable-looking rival, who could have crushed him like an insect, quietly awaited his opportunity until the German was prostrated by one of his periodical attacks. Then, approaching him cautiously, and taking care to maintain a safe distance between them, he commenced the assault in the following ingenious and characteristic manner.

"How do you feel now, Doctor?"

No answer.

"The paroxysm is over, I guess? Now, if you would be guided by my advice——"

A groan and convulsive spasm.

"You would leave off drugging yourself with your sulphates and muriates, which only have the effect of tanning the coats of your stomach——"

"*Oh! verdammter quack!*"

"And of converting you into the shrivelled up and desiccated proportions of an Egyptian mummy. Why, man, your cuticle is already dark enough to make mourning gloves for your family."

Another groan, the Doctor's eyes rolling wildly about in search of the nearest projectile.

"If you were to study nature more, and your absurd pharmacopoeia less, I calculate you would soon be as slick as a four-year old."

"*Kreutz donner-wetter!*"

"Why don't you try my hemostatic pills? They are free from minerals, and are composed merely of those simple botanical remedies

that prolonged the lives of the patriarchs to the age of the oak, and enabled them to people half the earth."

"*Der teufel hohl dich*—you tamt charlatan!"

"You licensed practitioners are obstinate creatures. You fancy you know all about pathology and physiology, whilst you actually create the diseases you pretend to treat. I cannot help saying that a more ignorant and benighted set——"

Here this complimentary allocution was suddenly brought to a termination, by a camp stool, which the Doctor's returning strength had placed within his reach, describing sundry gyrations round the Yankee's head, and putting him effectually to flight.

One of the most popular men of the detachment, owing to the amusement which he afforded us, was Johnny Broghan, as genial a little soul as ever ripened into mellowness under the combined influence of love and wine, with a rubicund and oleaginous countenance, stuck forward like an excrescence on a short, puffy figure, and resembling as nearly

as possible, in his *ensemble*, that *lusus* of vegetation, a double potato. He had been originally a farmer in Canada, but being unfortunate in his speculations, he had, with characteristic want of judgment, made choice of a military career. He entered a militia regiment in his native province, but, being troubled with a couple of physical peculiarities, which brought him more frequently than was desirable under the notice of his commanding officer, namely, an inability to march in straight lines, or from a defect in the tympanum, to catch the voice of his superiors in the field, he received and gladly accepted an intimation from his Colonel that, as nature had not qualified him to advance the glory of the British arms, he would do well to transfer his services to some other pursuit.

What his motives were for again embracing a profession in which he had cut so unhappy a figure, we never could make out, for his ancient infirmities seemed to have increased instead of diminished; his mode of progression, owing to another little weakness that had

subsequently grown upon him, having become more decidedly curvilinear, and his hearing, if possible, more difficult. If you add to these little peculiarities a voice which can no otherwise be described than as the bubble and squeak of some floundering animal, you have Johnny's portrait as nearly as I can sketch it.

Although our commanding officer had been only temporarily placed at our head, and had no intention of accompanying the expedition, it would not be fair to pass him over without notice, inasmuch as it would be difficult to find a more perfect specimen of a class not unfrequently to be met with in the States, although in Europe only familiar to us in the traditions that have consecrated the memory of Major Dalgetty. He was possessed of the true Yankee trading spirit, and regarded the profession of arms in a purely military light. Like his uncle, Colonel Jonathan D. S——, who got such a hard name for his regiment, by charging bayonets on a sheriff's officer, who had disturbed his afternoon *siesta*, it was supposed, I know not with how much justice,

that he was in the habit of speculating and gaining largely on the supplies for his men. With all this, he was a favourite with them, for his arrival at the fort was invariably celebrated by "general gaol delivery," no matter how important the military offence for which the delinquents were confined.

A circumstance, although trivial in itself, which occurred shortly after my arrival, will serve to illustrate thoroughly the character of the man. I have already alluded to the irregularity of the supplies of provisions furnished to us, and on one occasion "the pressure from within" became so great, that several of the scamps of the detachment sallied out at night for a foray through the portholes of the fort, and committed extensive depredations on the neighbouring gardens and poultry-yards. This was beginning the campaign rather early; and the result was, that a strong remonstrance was instantly forwarded to the captain's residence in the city, and he hastened to the fort in anticipation of a mutiny. The men were immediately paraded;

but, as usual, the sly smile and whispered jest that passed along the line showed that they laboured under no very great degree of apprehension. Our worthy commander, assuming an air of sternness calculated to make an impression on the injured parties, who were called in to assist at the scene, addressed the detachment in a speech of such indignant eloquence, that it was evident the wound inflicted on his sense of military honour would be difficult to heal. He threatened to inflict the severest punishment on the marauders, in case he should succeed in finding them out—an event, owing to the proverbial good nature of the captain, amongst the remotest of all possible contingencies; and in one short hour after, when the crowd had dispersed, and whilst the tones of his stern admonition were still ringing in our ears, our worthy chief was seated before a fine bird which had formed part of the booty, and which he pronounced excellent, qualifying his eulogium only by the expression of his regret that, as we had run the risk of taking the

turkey, we should have carelessly forgotten the sausages.

Having dashed off these few hurried sketches, in order to give the reader some idea of the heterogeneous elements of which the expedition was composed, it becomes necessary for me to say a few words respecting the organization of the force itself; as otherwise the laxity of discipline apparent in the foregoing details may appear strange to those unacquainted with the volunteer service of the States. The system is based upon the erroneous notion of republican equality being compatible with the requirements of a service which is in itself a pure despotism; for the corporal is as much a despot, with reference to the private soldier, as the commander-in-chief, whose absolute commands all are bound to obey, from the next in authority under him, down to the lowest man in the ranks. In order to soften down the arbitrary distinctions of the military service—distinctions so repugnant to American prejudices, on the score of equality—the men are permitted to choose their own offi-

cers; by which means it is supposed their greater alacrity and obedience will be secured, and they themselves rendered more effective than mere mercenaries in the field. But by this compromise there is nothing gained; the individual chosen is either some one who has held out liberal promises of indulgence and license, or some one whom government influence has succeeded in thrusting upon them. The result is, that they have two kinds of officers; a few regularly educated and qualified for their position, but by far the greater number inexperienced and unequal to the responsibilities of military command, and whose conflicting notions of its duties and requirements give rise to dissension, disobedience, and disorder. In addition to the privilege I have mentioned, the volunteer enjoys others denied to the regular soldier. He chooses his own uniform, receives larger pay, and serves a shorter period; for which, and many other reasons, he considers himself comparatively a free agent, and possessing a right to exemption from the severe discipline of the army.

I may, however, state, that the volunteers have frequently found themselves placed under officers, who, although disposed to indulge them to the very verge of weakness, were not inclined to concede to them their assumed right of disobedience, and who have not failed, in cases of insubordination, to teach them that, notwithstanding the many privileges they enjoy, they are, for the term of their service, as much bound by the regulations of the army as the regular forces, and equally punishable for offences against discipline. But the volunteers never can become thorough soldiers, under the present system; and I feel convinced that nothing but their individual daring and courage, under the direction of the few properly trained military men whose judgment and determination guided their reckless valour, and brought it to bear at the opportune moment, could have carried them through the many dangers they had to encounter, or enabled them to accomplish as much as they effected during the Mexican war.

CHAPTER II.

The Departure—Tribulations on Board—The Green-eyed Monster—The rail to Philadelphia—On Board again—Captain Briggs' elocution—The Atlantic—Scenes and incidents at Sea—Crossing the Line—A Wreck—News of Friends—Arrival at Rio de Janeiro.

The 15th of August, the day of our departure, at length arrived, with its excitement, its regrets, its bustle, and its leave-takings. We were going, at last; but whither, few amongst us knew, and many cared not: indeed, as I have before said, none of us entertained any very sanguine ideas of ever returning; for, at this period, the steadier portion of the community regarded a voyage to California in the light of an enterprise approximating in sanity to an expedition to the moon, respecting which, in fact, much more was known. Nevertheless, the scene was one

suggestive of varied emotions, and pregnant with interest and strong contrast. The band played cheering airs, but the loud sobs of relatives and friends about to separate, perhaps for ever, imparted deep melancholy to strains intended to be mirthful.

Here and there, lovers had coupled off, and were making the most of the few remaining minutes they had to spend together; a melancholy enjoyment participated in by several married pairs, whose affectionate and prolonged farewell conveyed a tacit reproach to sundry other couples, who, in the bustle of the embarkation, were exchanging unconjugal compliments respecting the due stowage of the baggage and the children! In another place were brothers, bidding adieu to tearful mothers and sisters, and to fathers who manfully checked the tide of grief as it sought its natural exit. Of this class, but apart from the rest, were two fine young men, between whom the ties of consanguinity or of friendship had been drawn so close, as to render this parting the bitterest and most affecting

of all the painful incidents passing around us. I never saw two beings more completely unmanned, as they stood side by side, with hands convulsively clasped together, and the briny flood pouring in a torrent down their cheeks, presenting a picture of such intense anguish, as to attract the attention even of those who had their own sorrows to occupy them.

We were so crowded, on board the schooner which was to convey us down to the steamer, that there ensued an incessant struggle on deck for breathing room: to walk about was impossible; to stand or to sit with comfort equally so; and below, suffocation appeared imminent. To increase our tribulation and uneasiness, we had to encounter the pangs of hunger; for we discovered that the cook had abandoned his post, and that there was no dinner. At about eleven at night, we lay-to off Castle Garden, when the outcry for food became so resolute, that our first lieutenant found it imperative to send ashore for provisions. The embassy, however, not pro-

ducing any result, inasmuch as the caterers did not make their appearance, it was judged advisable, about midnight, to despatch a second party in search of the delinquents, whom they found regaling themselves, and utterly oblivious of the cravings of their companions on board. The two parties returned together, bringing a scanty supply of bread and cheese and beer, which rapidly disappeared, the distribution of the former being pretty fair, but that of the liquid being regulated by the law of the strongest and the most enterprising. However, in spite of short commons, comparative contentment was beginning to manifest itself, when the cry of "Murder!" was suddenly uttered, in a piercing scream, by one of the women. There was a general rush to the hatch whence the shriek had proceeded, and where one of the sergeants and a lieutenant were seen engaged in what appeared a deadly struggle, each striving to throw the other overboard. The officer, being the stronger man, soon succeeded in mastering his adversary, and, dragging him over the hatch, let

him drop down, head over heels, greatly to the consternation and damage of those below.

We never heard anything more of the affair, save that the fracas had originated in the marital jealousy of the sergeant, whose very pretty spouse having become the object of marked attention on the part of the lieutenant, the husband had resented the insult, by attempting to cool the ardour of his superior in the manner related. Neither party sustained much injury; the husband came off worst, he having received a few severe contusions, from which he did not recover for a considerable time; whilst his opponent scarcely got a scratch, although his attire suffered greatly. As no further notice was taken by the principals, I concluded that the act of military insubordination was accepted as a set-off against the breach of morality on the part of the lieutenant, and that this understanding, although tacit, was perfectly satisfactory to both.

With the exception of this incident, nothing occurred to disturb our reflections du-

ring the cold night that followed, nor to relieve the monotony of the remainder of our journey to the steamer, on board of which we embarked at eight o'clock next morning, continuing the excursion, without interruption, until we reached the railway station in Jersey, where we took the cars for Philadelphia.

The trip to the latter city was very pleasant, but outrageously noisy, for the entire detachment waxing patriotic, never ceased shouting "The Star-spangled Banner," "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," and similar national effusions; but as each individual—true to his republican principles—sang independently of every one else, and the melodies were arbitrarily disfigured by a running accompaniment of shakes, caused by the unevenness of the rails, the effect of the whole was rather more startling than imposing or harmonious. At least, I judged so from the astonishment depicted upon the countenances of the villagers, as they rushed out, with open mouth and eyes astare, to gaze at us, as we were whisked past their quiet habitations.

On our arrival at Philadelphia, we repaired on board the Isabella, a fine packet-ship commanded by Captain George Briggs, to whose experience, good sense, equable conduct, and mild and gentlemanly deportment, I have much pleasure in here recording my testimony: qualities which secured him the good will and esteem of all who enjoyed the advantage of communication with him.

Here our *quondam* military captain took unexpected leave of us in a remarkable speech, which called his white pocket-handkerchief into active service. We all—except O'Reilly—gave him credit for the regret he expressed at being obliged, on account of the state of his health, to forego the pleasure of accompanying us in our campaigns. He certainly did shed a tear or two; but O'Reilly stoutly maintained that they had been produced by a certain well-known artificial appliance. Of course this was a mere opinion, although the expression of it involved him in many an amusing dispute.

The accommodations below consisted of

two tiers of bunks, or berths, one above the other, at each side, being just sufficient for our number. They were unprovided with beds or mattresses, blankets being considered sufficiently luxurious for men about to encounter the perils attendant upon a pioneering expedition into an unknown country. A place in the after part of the vessel, which had been bulwarked off for an hospital, was at once invaded and appropriated by the married men, for the use of themselves and wives, there being five couples of the party. Of course, there was a struggle for the bachelors' berths, which was decided in favour of those who were best able to do battle for them; and happy were the few, during that long six months, who on this occasion secured for themselves a berth near the gangways and hatches, and thereby a constant supply of light and fresh air!

We left Philadelphia on the nineteenth of August, 1847, and proceeded slowly down the Delaware, which was so shallow, in some places, and so winding in its course, as to offer serious obstacles to the progress of the

larger craft. However, the weather was delightful, and topics of conversation never failed.

On our way down, our worthy captain took an opportunity of addressing his crew; and, as his speech was both pithy and characteristic, I thought it not unworthy a place in my note-book.

"Men," said he, "we are beginning a long voyage, and I wish to give you a few words of advice. Do your duty, and we shall remain good friends; neglect it, and you will find out who is master. Don't interfere with the volunteers: your duties are distinct from theirs; and the less you have to do with them the better." (Complimentary! thought I.) "Lastly, avoid profane language and swearing, which are unbecoming to any man, even to a sailor; but if you must swear, I beg of you, as a favour, to let me have the benefit of the first oath. You may now go for'ard."

* * * *

Here we are, gliding over the vast Atlantic, and drawing near to Rio Janeiro, distant now

only a few degrees. What thoughts are suggested by this wide and dreary expanse of waters! How it makes us turn to home and friends! As the frail but buoyant vessel plunges into the blue depths of the ocean, how strongly do we feel that nature's ties are not loosely cast around our hearts! Home and friends!—words of which the deep significancy is unfelt, until solitude such as this clothes them with vitality, and brings them tangibly into our presence, only, as it seems, to remind us the more forcibly that it is but the starting of a plank, or the matter of a hole not larger than one's thumb, and home, and friends, and past, and present, are no more!

* * * *

Our life on board was not of the pleasantest description, on account of the motley elements that entered into the composition of our society. A band of volunteers, bound for a distant region, upon a roaming expedition, in search of better fortune, was not likely to prove other than a medley of characters, of various degrees of respectability,

and this not of average quality. Indeed, the scenes that occasionally occurred raised many a pang in my heart for the females who were compelled to witness them. In one young woman I took a deep interest. She was about twenty years of age, of handsome features, and symmetrical form, and had evidently been well educated, and accustomed to move in good society. She was the wife of a good-looking young fellow, possessing abilities far above the ordinary range, and who had been the editor of a newspaper; but, unable to turn his literary talents to profitable account, he had joined the expedition with the intention of settling in California. I used often to see her shudder, as she sat behind the scanty curtain which formed the only barrier between her berth and the quarters of the single men, whose profane and too often immodest language shocked her ear, and caused her to ply her needle the more diligently at some linen of miniature dimensions which it was manifest would ere long come into requisition.

The between-decks were usually blocked up by boxes and trunks, and baggage of various descriptions, piled up and disposed in the most awkward positions imaginable, such as were available serving for seats and tables, at which the members of our company sat and played at cards, or other games of chance, cheating one another, when the opportunity presented itself; swearing lustily when their dishonesty was detected, or the tide of luck had set against them; and not unfrequently terminating their disputations and games by a general engagement, in which such missiles as were nearest to hand came into closer contact with individual heads and faces than was altogether pleasant for those who officiated as mere spectators.

This propensity for gambling, which seemed to be very prevalent, was, on one occasion, productive of a scene that well nigh terminated fatally. The parties compromised were a Mr. B—— and his wife; the latter a very young and rather pretty woman, but with "shrew" very legibly written on her features.

She had often, it seems, remonstrated with, then rated, then abused him, for indulging in this fatal passion, which necessarily impoverished them. He turned a deaf ear, however, to her remonstrances, and was equally proof against her abuse. On the evening in question she became so exasperated, that she seized a knife that he wore in his waist-belt, and dealt him a blow which, if it had struck him as intended, must have stretched him a corpse at her feet. Fortunately, she missed her aim, owing to his nimbleness in evading the stroke, which, descending upon his bare arm—for he had his shirt-sleeves tucked up—laid it open, inflicting a ghastly wound. Regardless of this mischief, and, possibly, apprehensive of a second attack, he dexterously closed with her, and wrung the weapon from her grasp, completing his victory by bearing her bodily to the ground, on which he held her as in a vice; until, after a determined conflict for the space of fifteen minutes, her strength gave way, and she succumbed. The horror of this scene few who beheld it will

ever forget. Even in the midst of her struggles, she strove to bite; and, failing to revenge herself in this manner, spat in his face and kicked him, reckless of decency; finally, giving vent to her fury in language perfectly appalling in atrocity. Several peacemakers stepped forward, and we believed their efforts had succeeded in allaying the tempest; when, on being liberated, she suddenly sprung upon her infant; and, with her hair all dishevelled, her face flushed with rage, and her eyes glaring with the frenzy of unnatural excitement, rushed up the companion-ladder, and made for the side of the vessel, evidently bent upon sacrificing the little infant, and, possibly, herself. She was frustrated in her murderous intent by the interposition of the Captain, who snatched the child out of her arms, and forcibly detained her by pinning her back against the bulwarks. He remonstrated with her very sensibly, but, I fear, with little permanent effect; although the result of his admonition was to bring the tears into her eyes, and to send her back, much dejected,

into the cabin where her husband was having his wound dressed.

A portion of the vessel amid-ships, which had been taken possession of by a dense multitude of traders and speculators, acquired, from this circumstance, the nickname of "Chatham Street," or the "Jewry," the majority being Israelites, or their connexions. The shuffling, the confusion, the noise, and the chaffering, were indescribable, varied as the scene was by falls over boxes, and trunks, and bales of miscellaneous merchandize, and by "rough-and-tumble" fights, to say nothing of the jargon of tongues from every known country and kingdom, interspersed with the strangest oaths, the oddest jests, and the quaintest commentaries upon the quality, price, and manufacture, of the heterogeneous mass of articles put up for sale. We were nearing Rio, and, therefore, every one wanted money, and sought to procure it as best he could. As we proceeded, the love of barter appeared to increase, until it degenerated from legitimate trading into a system of gam-

bling, disguised under the name of "raffles," the chances being dependant upon the cast of dice; thus many articles were disposed of, which, but for this ingenious resource, would probably have remained on hand.

I may here mention, that, amongst other modes of passing the time, the volunteers resorted to a recreation far more amusing to the spectators on such occasions, and to the actors in the comedy, than to him who was selected to figure the most prominently in it. This was called "blanketing," the nature of which operation is, doubtless, sufficiently familiar to all not to require a special description at my hands. It was not, at any time, decidedly popular; but so inveterate was the love of mischief in Judson, O'Reilly, and a few others, and so strong the party they got together to support them, that remonstrance and resistance were alike unavailing when they presented themselves to seize the victim on whom their evil eye had fallen. Appeal to the Captain was alike useless; he stuck hard and fast to his text of "not inter-

fering with the volunteers, so long as they endangered no lives by their pranks;" thus, almost every one's turn came round in time, although, from some cause I am unable to explain, mine was deferred until the last. But I was not disposed to submit to the fate of the immortal Sancho Panza without at least making a stand against what I considered to be an invasion of individual rights; and, receiving from one of my companions an intimation that my hour was come, and my tormentors at hand, I made a bolt into the berths of the married folks, into which *sanctum* the band, however reckless and alive for mischief, durst not penetrate. In vain they called upon me to "come out and be tossed like a man." In vain Judson assured me, on the faith of his own experience, that "it was nothing more than a mouthful of wind." In vain O'Reilly urged, as an additional inducement, that, if I would only "thry it once, he'd be tossed with me for company." I was not to be seduced. On the other hand, my companions were obstinate; a council was

held, in which the two parties I have named took the lead. I was in hopes they had renounced their project: not at all, as the sequel will show. They had withdrawn, and I was about to repair to my bunk, after waiting some time, to make sure my tormentors were not lying in ambush; when suddenly there appeared the corporal of the guard, heading a file of men, their purpose being, as I was forthwith informed, to arrest me for violating the sanctity of the married quarters. Compelled to yield to this authority, I came out of my sanctuary; when a loud laugh and a dance of exultation proclaimed the whole manœuvre to be a mere *ruse-de-guerre*, devised to make me desert my place of refuge.

Another moment, and words, like myself, would have been literally tossed to the winds. But I was resolute and indignant, and, drawing my bowie-knife, made so threatening a demonstration with it, that the foremost fell back much disconcerted. I did not, however, intend murder. I had certainly yielded to an awkward impulse of self-defence, but reflec-

tion instantly shamed me into putting up my knife again; though I did not feel the more disposed to surrender my person to the tender mercies of my mischievous friends. Retaining then a defensive attitude, or, more properly speaking, a wary one, I ventured to remonstrate temperately but firmly on the absurdity of their conduct, not to give it a harsher name. My preachment was received with shouts of derision, and I doubt not but the affair would have terminated in a scuffle, had it not been for O'Reilly, who shouted out, "Come away, boys!—the fellow isn't worth a toss up. Sure, we're wasting our precious time thrying to dhrive taste into him, and Mr. Judson here a longing all the while to have another swim in the air." So saying, and giving the hint to the others, the unlucky Judson took my place in the blanket, and, judging from the peals of laughter which I soon afterwards heard, was operated upon to the satisfaction of the rioters.

I have no reason to believe that the ceremonies usually observed on crossing the line

were shorn of any of their magnificence on the occasion of our passage. I confess I felt some surprise on beholding his Oceanic Majesty suddenly appear on deck—quite fresh from the coral caves of his dominions, as we were informed, wearing a bran-new New York "rowdy" hat, and with a face as black as the ace of spades; a fact, by the way, which O'Reilly accounted for by stating, that the god of the ocean had just come back from sweeping Mount Vesuvius, which every body knew "wasn't asy to cure of smoking." However, as his Majesty's beard was unexceptionably classical, and his behests were not to be disputed, we took our turns at the tub, and submitted, with as good a grace as we could muster, to the tar-brush and iron hoop, although I am bound in honesty to admit, the attempt to assume a pleasant countenance under these circumstances proved a general failure. Altogether, the ceremony passed off without any disagreeable incident; the fun, which was, as may be conceived, of the most rough and boisterous sort, lasting until every

one had passed the ordeal, or paid the fine exacted for immunity.

Shortly before we reached Rio, there was great commotion on board one morning, occasioned by the look-out descrying a dismasted vessel, which, upon nearing, we discovered to be the "Mameluke." She was the first craft of any kind that we had made out since we sailed; and the excitement consequent upon falling in with one under such distressing circumstances may be more readily imagined than described. She lay on her starboard beam-ends, completely waterlogged, her masts gone by the board, her larboard bulwarks carried away, and the best portion of her cabin-front staved in by the force of the heavy seas she had encountered, and which were now making a clean breach over her, for the weather was very rough and squally. She appeared to be strongly built, and could not long have left port, as her timbers were new, and her paint still fresh. We strained our eyes in vain in search of crew or passengers; but of these, living or dead, there were no

vestiges. We earnestly desired to board her, and several volunteers presented themselves to undertake the perilous service; but the Captain observed, that even a whale-boat could not possibly live on such a sea, and peremptorily refused to endanger the life of any of his crew; "uselessly," he added, "as he felt assured the wreck had been abandoned." We were compelled to submit to what I have every reason to believe was a wise determination; but the incident furnished food for much painful speculation, and produced a melancholy impression on all.

Shortly after, we spoke the Brutus; it was then quite dusk, and tolerably calm. She was returning to New York from California; and we learned, with much pleasure, that the body of volunteers she had conveyed thither had arrived safely at their destination. We received this intelligence with three cheers, it being regarded as a favourable omen, and in the afternoon of the 29th of October we entered the port of Rio de Janeiro.

CHAPTER III.

Rio de Janeiro—Bumboat Joe—Symptoms of mutiny aboard—Volunteer discipline—Scenes on shore—Slaves and slavery—Visit to a monastery—A frolic and its consequences—Glorious news—Adieu to Rio.

We cast anchor at a considerable distance from the town, and not far from a small English war-craft, of which we had clumsily run foul whilst coming round to our position, though without doing or receiving much damage. The harbour and the town have been so frequently and so well described, that I shall content myself with stating little more than that both are eminently picturesque. The former is partially surrounded with lofty and shadowy hills, which seen early in the morning, before the sun has entirely dispersed the mists peculiar to this latitude, with the houses of the town peeping out of the vapours as they roll up the romantic declivities and crags

on which they are erected, for the most part, overtopped here and there by an ancient church of quaintest architecture, or by an equally venerable monastery, retaining in its age the evidences of its early strength—I say, that seen through this medium particularly, or in the full brightness of the noonday sun, or again at eveningtide, or, lastly, when the moon is shedding its silvery lustre over the scene, the landscape presents one of those charming pictures which poets sometimes dream of in their fictions, but which artists may never hope to realize in portraiture upon their canvass.

We had not got comfortably moored when we were besieged by a fleet of bumboats, as they are called, veritable canoes, paddled in true Indian style, and manned by swarthy-complexioned men and women, more than three parts naked, all striving to be first in the scramble to supply us with bananas, plantains, water-melons, cakes, cheese, bread, sardines, cigars, &c., articles which disappeared with a celerity savouring of magic, for

such delicacies were unknown on board. The confusion was immense, and the supply of edibles unequal to the demand, until Bumboat Joe—the Napoleon of these aquatic caterers—appeared in proper person, bringing an abundance of similar luxuries, so that at length every one procured a sufficiency. I may mention, *en passant*, that Joe is a character well known to those who frequent the South Atlantic shores. He is about four feet six in height, but I will not venture upon a calculation of his girth. To say he is as broad as he is long, would fail to convey any adequate idea of his outline; but if the reader can fancy an animated butter-firkin propped up on two nine-pins, and surmounted by a Dutch cheese, he may realize a faint image of Bumboat Joe. He is a great favourite amongst the sailors, on account of his drollness, not only of appearance, but of speech, which is a cross of his own, between English and Portuguese, the latter being his native tongue. He is about fifty years of age, and has passed the whole of his life in a bumboat. He is re-

puted wealthy, and I have no doubt report, in this instance, speaks truth, although his appearance would have justified one in giving him a trifle for charity's sake, if one had chanced to meet him in the street.

We soon learned that our stay at Rio would be limited to the time necessary to repair our vessel—of which the foremast had received severe damage during a recent heavy gale—and to take in a proper supply of provisions, to wit, fresh biscuit and salt horse; for I may as well mention here, that the ordinary regulations with regard to victualling us had not been acted upon, probably because we were *only volunteers*, or irregulars, and irregularity in everything connected with us, or with our comforts, was considered a matter of course. However, in consequence of certain remonstrances addressed to the Consul, some of the officers belonging to the flag-ship Ohio—not unworthily called the pride of the American navy—boarded us, and soon after sent a portion of her crew to assist in repairing our damage, and in getting the requisite stores on

board. As we were thus given to believe that our stay would be a short one, we became extremely anxious to make the most of our time ashore, where we were permitted to go in regular turns.

On one of these occasions, one of our comrades involved himself in rather an awkward scrape. Having been indulging in deep potations, he picked a quarrel with the first Spaniard that he met, and, by way of a joke, knocked him down; but scarcely was the blow struck, than he was surrounded by eight armed soldiers, who, to carry the jest a little further, conveyed him to the black-hole, in which he soon found himself in the pleasant society of a select number of the *lazzaroni* of Rio. He was searched, and a knife being found upon him, the case assumed rather a serious aspect; for, in consequence of several sanguinary frays having occurred between the Spanish and the American irregulars, who seemed ever on the alert for mischief of this sort, the local government had determined to make an example of the next offender. What

penalty would have been inflicted upon him I cannot take upon myself to say. I know that it was only by the greatest interest that his liberation was at length procured, and even then at the latest possible moment. However, we were very glad to see him again amongst us, notwithstanding that the peculiar diet of the black-hole had extinguished his sprightliness, and considerably reduced him in bulk. The following incident will furnish another illustration of the free-and-easy discipline of our corps:

One of our men asked leave one day to go ashore, which was refused, as it was his turn to remain on board. Upon this, a furious quarrel ensued between him and the second lieutenant, who had mortally offended him by this refusal, and the result was, that the refractory volunteer was put into irons and kept a close prisoner for several days. But he was not disposed to let the matter end there; and spying a boat shortly after his release, he beckoned the boatman alongside, and slid down into his canoe, bidding him make in all

haste for the shore. His escape was soon discovered, and the second lieutenant roared out to him most lustily to come back. But the delinquent thrust a piece of money into the hand of the boatman, who, puzzled what to do, had ceased pulling, and folding his arms, stood upright in the boat, whistling "Yankee Doodle." Again the officer shouted, again the boatman stopped, and a second piece of money again induced him to continue pulling towards shore. Perceiving that shouts availed nothing, half a dozen men were ordered to the side of the ship; the second lieutenant gave the word to "make ready;" still the boat proceeded: "present;" she quickened her speed: "fire;" and fire they did, but at some imaginary object somewhere about a mile above the head of the fugitive, for your true American volunteer knows better than to shoot his brother-in-arms, under such circumstances. When the smoke of their pieces had blown aside, the bold fellow who had put us all in such a fright was seen, still erect in the boat, with his thumb to the tip of his

nose, his fingers playfully keeping time to the tune he was whistling, and extended towards the spot where the second lieutenant was standing, rating the men for being such bad shots. A few minutes more, and the runaway was capering about on the beach, like a drunken Indian.

It so chanced that my turn ashore came next in rotation, and that I and two others received instructions to arrest the culprit, and bring him back with us; but I soon discovered that, whatever might be my own ideas on the subject, nothing was farther from the intention of my companions than to obey these orders. Indeed, the mutinous spirit on board had developed itself to such an extent, in consequence of the restrictions imposed on the liberty of the volunteers, that one morning there came from the Ohio, with other articles, an extra supply of handcuffs for the special use of the refractory. With reference to the errand on which we were sent, I finally reasoned myself into the conviction, that it would be best for me to prove myself a

thorough volunteer, and, though I had respectfully received my orders, to follow the example of my companions, and please my own inclination about obeying them. When I state that my two comrades were O'Reilly and Judson, no surprise will be manifested at my forming so wise a resolution.

We landed in high spirits, and were soon, as O'Reilly expressed it, "throwing our eyes about us." I was greatly delighted with the town, on account of the varied scenes it presented; but as we turned the corner of one of the streets, my thoughts were suddenly diverted into a very different channel by our stumbling all at once upon several African slaves, more of whom we subsequently met in almost every second thoroughfare. They were unmanacled it is true, but the brand of ownership had left its indelible stamp upon their flesh, in all the horrible variety that the fancy or caprice of their taskmasters could devise. Rows of hideous lumps on the cheek, indentations seared into the forehead, ugly scars on the neck, and in numerous instances

clipped and otherwise disfigured ears, attested a refinement of torture characteristic of but one portion of this accursed system. "With such marks upon them, how can these poor creatures ever be free?" thought I. The chains and the manacles are not there, it is true; from these they may escape. But from the brand of the red-hot iron, which has once marked their bodies as the property of their fellow-men, not even the abolition of human bondage, and the emancipation of the race, can ever enable them to flee.

I may here mention, incidentally to this subject, that one dark night one of our crew was caught in the act of putting off in the water-boat to a slaver that lay snugly to in a remote corner of the harbour. He confessed that the captain of the slaver—who, I well remember, had been on board our vessel a few days previously—had made him tempting offers to induce him to join his ship on the next cruise. He yielded, but, as I have observed, was apprehended in the act of desertion. The same captain had tampered with the other

men, who, however, remained true to their colours.

To return to our rambles on shore: we made for the monastery on the hill, where we were extremely well received and hospitably entertained. I was much struck with the appearance, manners, and intelligence of one of the monks, a man of tall stature and lean habit of body, but remarkably handsome, and of a most benevolent countenance. I tried my Spanish, but could not get on, and he was equally at a loss to make us understand his English. Fortunately, I bethought me of my French, in which he was proficient, and I was appointed interpreter. My office proved no sinecure; for what with the inquisitiveness of my Yankee friend, the volubility of O'Reilly, and the cross-questioning of the priest, I found enough to do. Our conversation embraced a variety of topics, as may readily be supposed. The monk asked me all sorts of questions about England, her institutions, people, commerce, and so forth; interrogated the Yankee respecting the States, Congress, Zachary Taylor,

and the progress of railways; and lastly, discovering that O'Reilly was an Irishman, puzzled him uncommonly with queries relating to the history of his country, Catholic Emancipation, the Union, &c., which it excited my admiration to see him evade, when he could not coax his memory for facts. The name of Daniel O'Connell arising, however, naturally enough in the course of this conversation, O'Reilly found himself in a new element: and the monk professing high respect for the Agitator, and regretting that circumstances had precluded him from ever seeing or hearing him, O'Reilly volunteered a specimen of his style and manner of oratory, which I have not the smallest hesitation in saying Mr. O'Connell would have been sorely puzzled to identify, although it answered the purpose intended, namely, to gratify our friendly recluse, of whom we shortly after took leave, with numerous protestations expressive of mutual satisfaction and good-will.

We resumed our peregrinations until it was growing late in the evening. I began to think

about the ship, but my companions, whose libations had awakened their spirit of mischief, vowed they would not return until they had had some fun; to which O'Reilly added, "And a thrifle of a scrimmage, just to keep our hands in." Remonstrances were useless, and flight impracticable, for I was safely secured on each side, and I resigned myself to my fate, which I anticipated would soon be incarceration with the *lazzaroni*. In this mood, we came upon the "Plaza," at the lower end of which we espied the carriage of the Emperor, drawn up in front of one of the large houses, and around it several of our comrades standing admiringly. A shout of glee, simultaneous with the recognition, rang through the square, and then a council was held to determine what mischievous frolic we should perpetrate. O'Reilly cast a side-look at the unoccupied carriage, at the stately coachman on the box, and at the magnificently liveried domestics who were chatting lazily in the doorway. He said something to Judson, who whispered it to a second, and both proceeded very leisurely to

mount on the box. At the same moment, O'Reilly seized me by the arm, and, opening the carriage-door, pushed me headlong in, tumbling over my heels as he followed me, and calling out to our companions to make haste after us, as there was plenty of room. No guards were near, and the servants appeared to be taken so much by surprise at the boldness of this absurd prank, that they had not time to prevent us from thus committing ourselves, or perhaps were deterred by our determined aspect from attempting it. Under the pressure of a naked bayonet on each side of him, the coachman whipped his horses, and we dashed off at full speed, up one street, down another, and across a third, at the imminent risk of "a spill" at every corner, and to the wonderment of the good citizens of Rio, who had never before seen his Imperial Majesty's family in such a hurry to go nowhere.

But this state of things could not continue, and we were soon warned of an approaching climax, by the shouts of the crowd, now in hot pursuit of us, and by the turning out of the

guard, as we again neared the Plaza, whence we had started. With great dexterity, Judson seized the reins, and brought the vehicle to a stand-still, with a jolt that caused the inside-passengers to rub noses, after rather a disagreeable fashion. To "bonnet" the coachman, to slip down from the box, and to disappear, were the work of a moment with him, nor were we slow to vacate our seats, upon becoming alive to our peril. We had great difficulty, nevertheless, in extricating ourselves from the few who had even now come up with us; but, thanks to our resolution, to the nimbleness of our legs, to our doublings and turnings round dark corners, and, above all, to our good luck, and the darkness, we contrived to escape into a by-street, where we came full-tilt upon our friend Judson, who had entered it at the other end. We determined to part company here; and accordingly, Judson, O'Reilly, and myself, departed in one direction, and our four companions in another, our intention being to explore our way to the shore singly, and get back to the ship as

fast as we could. As ill-luck would have it, upon turning into a neighbouring street, we unexpectedly came upon the delinquent whom we had received orders to arrest. By way of a joke, O'Reilly instantly collared him, exclaiming, "Here's the chap that we've been hunting all day! You must come with us, my fine fellow." But the man was not inclined to surrender, and, believing O'Reilly to be in earnest, assumed a menacing attitude; shaking his capturer off, and drawing a long bowie-knife, he swore he would have the heart's blood of the first of us who attempted to lay hands upon him. He was fearfully excited, being still under the influence of intoxication; and I doubt not but he would have been as good as his word, had not O'Reilly burst out laughing, assuring him that nothing was further from our intention than to spoil his frolic ashore, after he had been so long at sea, though, if he were "in the mind for a bit of a fight, he was his man—just for the fun of the thing."

I cannot say how this affair would have terminated, as, in spite of O'Reilly's assurances,

the man seemed disinclined to believe him, although his companions—three more of our comrades, and one of them a sergeant of the same company—were zealous in their endeavours to pacify him; the difficulty was solved, however, by our hearing the tramp of the guard and the noise of voices, which, reminding us of our recent exploit rather unpleasantly, we again took to our heels, and finally succeeded in reaching our vessel.

Our excessively foolish adventure might have ended seriously, if the inquiry which followed it had resulted in a discovery of the perpetrators of the mischief. But of course nobody knew anything about it; and notwithstanding dates, circumstances, and suspicions, the impossibility of identifying us put an end to the investigation. At the time, however, I strongly suspected that the extraordinary celerity with which the remainder of our stores was shipped, subsequently to a long interview between our captain and the consul, was mainly due to this event, and our departure thereby considerably accelerated.

I may likewise record it as an historical episode, that, during our sojourn, news arrived of the victorious achievements of the American troops, the capture of Monterey, and the triumphant march into the city of Mexico. This intelligence perhaps it was that caused us to hail our proximate departure with increased satisfaction, moreover contributing so largely to the good humour of our superiors, that our runaway comrade escaped with a reprimand, which O'Reilly likened to "a mouthful of new-milk," so mild was its nature. Under these circumstances, then, we sailed from Rio, after a sojourn of three weeks, which, for all we did there, or that required to be done, might have been limited to one without any inconvenience.

CHAPTER IV.

Cape Horn—Valparaiso—Mutiny aboard—A midnight alarm—A gale—Disappointed hopes—Monterey—The Californians—The fandango—A novel compliment—Our quarters—A fray in the town—The lions.

No circumstance of any importance occurred during our passage towards Cape Horn, that redoubtable bugbear to landsmen. We encountered rough weather and smooth, tempests and calms, and contrived to kill the time as well as could be expected. A shoal of porpoises and a stray shark or two would now and then vary the monotony of our fishing, of which I for one became extremely fond; beyond this, everything was very dull, and the days as much alike as the bonitas, or skipjacks, we used to hook. The harpooning of a porpoise, however, usually put us into good spirits for a few hours, on account of the bustle

incidental to bringing him safely to deck, and afterwards cutting the monster up, cooking, and eating him—that is, as much of him as could be eaten. I cannot say I was sufficiently epicurean in my tastes to relish this marine delicacy, which was neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor vegetable, but a cross between them all, with a dash of sea-weed; but the majority of my companions seemed to enjoy it amazingly.

I had heard and read so much of Cape Horn, and of the dangers of the passage—rounding, or doubling it, as the sailors call it—that I experienced considerable disappointment on finding ourselves becalmed off this interesting point of the great American continent. At the special request of the captain, I took a sketch of it, though it possesses no pretensions to picturesque beauty. It rises out of the ocean, a perpendicular mass of rocks, towering to a formidable height, in piles of abrupt crags, unadorned with a particle of vegetation, the summit clad in a snowy mantle, drooping to a considerable distance down the sides; the entire heap is an emblem of barrenness.

We lay for some days off Cape Horn, suffering all the annoyances incidental to a dead calm at sea; but at last a breeze sprung up, and, soon freshening into a lively gale, we stretched our canvass to it, and rapidly lost sight of land.

On the 30th December, the look-out gave notice of our being off the coast of Chili, whose brown hills we were shortly after able to descry. I observed that they seemed pretty well covered with pasture, but were—like the entire coast of South America, on the Pacific side—entirely devoid of those masses of lofty trees generally so essential to the beauty of a landscape. True it is that chains of mountains, rearing their proud crests into the clouds, a succession of hills clad in nature's choicest verdure, and rocks broken into every variety of form, as seen through the mellow atmosphere of these dreamy latitudes, possess a novelty which has a great charm; nevertheless, remembering the scenery of my own native land, I found out what I considered to be the great characteristic deficiency of the

scene before me, and sighed for the presence of the umbrageous creations of our own woods and forests, where shade and shelter are alike found from sun and shower.

On the first day of the new year, we anchored off the port of Valparaiso, but in consequence of the irregularities our volunteers had been guilty of at Rio, a general prohibition was issued against any of us going ashore, a mandate which caused immense excitement, and considerably diminished the popularity of the officer whose duty it was to publish it; much against his will, no doubt, for he was most kind and indulgent. It was announced, also, that we should set sail again at four o'clock, as soon as we had replenished our stores; so some of us made up our minds to be happy on board, and orderly. Scarcely half an hour had elapsed, however, before it was discovered that the captain's gig had disappeared, and with her several of our men. This was sufficient to stir up the dormant spirit of mutiny, and immediately there ensued a general rush to the gangway, for the

purpose of boarding a lighter that lay alongside, empty. In vain the guard was turned out, and the officer on duty remonstrated; the men disappeared over the side, like so many eels; nor was I one of the last. We got cleverly away, giving three groans a-piece for the lieutenants of our respective companies. The result of our hardihood was, that the will of the majority—as in all true republican institutions it ought—carried the day, and those who were compelled to stay on board because there was no boat to bring them ashore soon procured the necessary permission, and harmony was re-established; but our departure was postponed until next day.

Whilst we were on shore, Johnny Broghan distinguished himself by getting outrageously intoxicated, by which indulgence he did not improve the directness of his very singular gait. In spite, however, of his many eccentricities, he would probably have come off as well as the rest, but he suddenly took it into his head to begin shouting, at the top of his voice, "The Enniskillen Dragoons!"

accompanying the air with such a profusion of military flourishes with his bayonet, that, for fear of accidents, and possibly because the Chilians were indifferent judges of vocal music, he was soon marched off to the black-hole, where, we were given to understand, his valour evaporated in a sound sleep.

About midnight, we were all startled, in the midst of our merriment, by an alarming discharge of musketry and cannon, which we soon ascertained had proceeded from on board our vessel. It was "the boys" on board saluting the year 1848, much to the consternation of the town, and to the discomforture of the fleet of boats that put off to learn the cause of the clatter.

I can say of Valparaiso only that it is a very pretty city, situated in a valley, with houses — chiefly of the poorer sort — picturesquely built on the declivities of the hillside. Amongst the most remarkable I may mention two houses of entertainment, which from their position the sailors have nicknamed the "maintop" and the "mizentop."

The population, as far as I could judge, is chiefly composed of the Spanish and the Indian races, the women being generally both handsome and good-natured, with a weakness for the Americans. I saw very few negroes. The climate is said to be healthy, and the country produces abundance of vegetables, amongst which are potatoes of the finest kind I have ever tasted.

We weighed anchor next morning with scarcely two-thirds of our number on board, and thrice was the vessel compelled to lay-to, in order to enable the absentees to come up with her. I also learned that, during the night, the steward and two Frenchmen, his countrymen, who had joined our expedition, had deserted.

We continued our voyage without any event occurring worth recording, save the death of one of our companions, whose constitution had been shattered by excessive dissipation. On the 14th of February we came in sight of the promised land; and, though its hills were barren, we hailed them with joy, as the har-

bingers of comfort and abundance in store for us, after the endurances of so many hardships and privations. But we were doomed to disappointment, for the wind suddenly changed; and soon coming on to blow a terrific gale, we were obliged gradually to take in every stitch of canvass, and finally to run before it under bare poles, at the rate of twelve knots an hour. Our little vessel gallantly breasted the huge seas, and rose on their foaming crests buoyant as a swan, then dipped into the yawning abyss of green waters beneath, to be presently tossed up in their mighty arms, high, high up, as a giant would fling up a feather to the winds. Her timbers creaked and groaned, and every rope strained at its work; the wind whistled through her cordage, and buffeted the sails as they lay snugly clewed up in crabs, as if challenging them to a contest with it, now that it was in the pride of its fierce strength; still the taut little craft held on her course, yielding to the force of her potent master, but only biding her time to come off victorious. At last the gale lulled;

and fetching up under a favourable breeze, we reached Monterey on the morning of the 18th of February.

The bay on which this town is situated is large, extending north-east some eighteen or twenty miles, but, being shallow, does not afford much protection to vessels; indeed, the harbour itself is not more than a mile in length, and is formed of piles of rock and loose stone, jutting out into the sea. On entering the roadstead, every object appeared to me—it might be fancy—on the most diminutive scale, with the exception of the hills surrounding the town, which are lofty, and present a pleasing aspect. They are studded with pines, stunted oaks, and small shrubs; and though this was the end of the winter season, the vegetation appeared most flourishing. From this almost evergreen background the tiny, one-story houses stand out in bold relief, their whitewashed faces glistening in the sun, and deepening the verdure of the landscape.

These miniature habitations have three or

more apartments, connected with one another, the roof, common to all, projecting some four or five feet beyond the walls, and forming a kind of verandah. I likewise observed several log-houses, built by the Americans, as I justly concluded, the natives possessing no idea of this sort of edifice. To the extreme right, on the summit of a lofty hill, and on the top of a nondescript building which presented the appearance of a collection of palings and log-huts, heaped promiscuously together, but which I was informed was the fort, waved the flag of the United States.

The picture was completed by the presence of three vessels, riding lazily on the heaving bosom of the now calm sea: one of them a frigate, the Warren, condemned as unseaworthy; the second, a merchantman; and the third, a brigantine which had been taken from the Mexicans at the commencement of the war, for smuggling arms and ammunition. There were likewise several Indians, clad in dirty blankets, who by their gestures, as they stood on the beach, evidently regarded our

approach with no small degree of curiosity: they were as black as a coal.

We landed at the foot of an abrupt rock, on the top of which stood the Custom-house, a long, whitewashed building, of ancient date, and about twenty feet in length: our way to it lay along a pier of most unsafe appearance, and considerably so in reality, being constructed of a few logs thrown loosely across a series of half rotten posts sunk into the sand, and liable to be dislodged by the ebb and the flow of the tide. To our left, the beach was covered for miles with heaps, or rather hillocks, of sand, which in many places stretched as far into the interior as the eye could reach.

We remained several days on board, in consequence of no preparations having been made for our reception here, as it was expected we should land at San Francisco. However, we disembarked at last, and were received by a motley crowd, broken up into groups, evidently sharing in the excitement of the hour. The portly Californian, under his

ample-brimmed *sombrero* and gay *serapa*, the dark-skinned and half-clad Indian, and the Yankee, in his close European costume, intermingled or chatting apart in groups of threes and fours, imparted an irresistible charm of novelty to the scene, most grateful to us, who had been so long pent-up on board ship, and accustomed to see the same faces, day after day, for months.

"Faugh!" exclaimed O'Reilly, pinching his nose as we came up to a long, low building, from which issued a smell the most unsavoury imaginable: "sure, it ain't fresh mate they're killing here."

We learned that this was the slaughter-house and hide store. The hides were stretched out to dry, and form the staple of traffic between the natives and the ships that frequent the port. We hurried past it, and were soon out of harm's way. We mustered at a convenient spot, not far off from the end, or beginning — I don't know which — of the principal street, and formed into platoons; and, as we had contrived to preserve our uni-

forms very carefully, we elicited no small degree of admiration as we marched to our quarters, which were nothing more than some old Spanish barracks, in tolerable repair, and of the lath, plaster, and whitewash style of architecture.

We were received by about twenty or thirty volunteers—old hands, as they were called; and so they were, in more senses than one; but, as they seemed very glad of our coming, and provided us with abundance of fresh beef, we had no reason for the moment to take exception to the results of their experience.

As soon as I was somewhat refreshed, I took advantage of an offer from one of the "old hands," and proceeded to explore the town. By way of general description, I may say that the majority of the houses are built of *adobè*, (unburnt brick) without decent windows or doors, and many in a deplorable state of decay. The school-house, however, is a very fine building, constructed of square blocks of stone, and lofty, being two stories high, and containing three large rooms, one of which is

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not less than fifty feet in length, by twenty in breadth. It has a portico, and is surrounded by a handsome stone wall. It was built by an Irish volunteer, by trade a master-mason, and resident here, and who, having amassed a large fortune by some lucky speculations, bethought him that it was time to return to his wife, whom he had left at New York; in consequence of which resolution he abstained one morning from attending muster, and was not known to have taken leave of the prospective honours of the service until the vessel that conveyed him away was too far off for martial law to reach him. The projector of the building was the Reverend Waller Colton, the Alcalde, who raised the necessary funds partly by voluntary subscriptions from the townspeople, and partly by fines inflicted upon offenders against the law, and further promoted the philanthropic object by employing in its erection the culprits whom he condemned to the penalty of hard labour for terms varying in duration.

Our next visit was to the fort on the top of the hill. It is of wood, the magazine and

strongest places being constructed with logs, dovetailed together, and the whole surrounded by stakes. It reminded me very strongly of Robinson Crusoe's citadel. Lightly as I thought of it, however, I saw it was provided with some excellently mounted artillery, and there was abundance of ammunition; so that it would, doubtless, do its work well, if necessity required it.

On our way through the town in the evening, we went into one of the *fandangos*, or dancing-booths—if I may employ the term—where the motley population were enjoying themselves after a fashion which induced me to procure a partner and join the "break-down." I merely mention this occurrence, on account of a very singular compliment which my *dark* partner paid me, in return, I suppose, for my gallantry; though, as we could not understand each other, and only laughed, she may have given me credit for more boldness than I really possessed. I had turned my head away for an instant, when smash came something upon my unfortunate

pate, and immediately after there fell over my shoulders a shower of fragments of an egg-shell, intermingled with a quantity of very minute gilt and coloured papers which had been substituted for its natural contents. I need not say that I was very well pleased at the substitution. Of course, I laughed immoderately, and subsequently learnt from my *cicerone* that this is the country-fashion, when a lady wishes to bestow upon her partner in the dance a signal mark of her approbation.

I observed that the ladies affected the European style, but wore their dresses fitted rather loosely to their figures; which, by the way, were uncompressed by whalebone; nor did I remark any artificial additions superadded to compensate for the parsimony of Nature. The gentlemen wore *calcineros*, or pantaloons, that button up from the ancle to the hip, but are generally worn open from the knee downwards. Red or blue sashes were bound round their waist, the tasselled ends of which are very long, being allowed to fall gracefully over the hip, where they are kept

in their place by a simple but ingenious contrivance.

As I have mentioned the *serapa*, it may be as well to describe it here. It is of cloth, of rich colour, and of the shape of an ordinary blanket, having a hole cut in the centre, parallel with the sides, and through which the head is passed. The Dons of California, however, do not wear them in this fashion, but, fixing one end on the right shoulder, cast the other gracefully over the left, allowing it to fall in natural and careless folds. At length, we returned to our quarters, where, in one large and comfortless room, were at least fifty men, sitting, crouching, and lying in every variety of posture, the principal number occupying the middle of the apartment in the dust, and dirt, and damp, with their heads on their knapsacks, describing a circle, of which the common centre was formed by an accumulation of feet. This they called a round bed. The muskets and side-arms, the military hats, belts, and cartridge-boxes, were disposed wherever there was a vacant spot,

and the whole scene was so uncomfortable to look at, that I regretted the rain prevented me from seeking repose under the outer palisade. I procured a log, and sat down upon it; and, though there was a great uproar, I suppose I fell asleep at last, as I remember suddenly starting to my feet at the report of a pistol. A number of us rushed out in the direction of the sound, and, hastening over a wooden bridge, thrown across a ravine that traverses the centre of the town, found ourselves in the midst of a desperate fray engaged between about twenty Spaniards and some of the old volunteers, who had been assaulted by the former. These being very superior in number, were taking to flight, but, on perceiving us, gave a shout, and renewed the combat. Knives had been drawn on both sides, and some severe wounds inflicted; and I do not know how the affair might have terminated, had not O'Reilly and Freünd come up armed with heavy stakes which they had wrenched from the bridge, and begun belabouring friend and foe with

more earnestness than discrimination, until they discovered their mistake, and confined their operations to the Spaniards, whom they compelled to retreat, breathing vows of vengeance. The quarrel had originated in a gambling-house, in consequence of one of the party, a Spaniard, being detected in the act of cheating an American, who resented the dishonesty by knocking him down. This man, it appears, was waylaid on his road home; but, seeing some of the Spanish party prowling about, he changed his itinerary, and made for another house, where he expected to find some of his companions. Fortune favoured him in this matter, and they were all returning together, when the natives suddenly fell upon them. The pistol we had heard went off accidentally in the scuffle without injuring any one. These scenes were of frequent occurrence, and were indeed so common, that no one heeded them.

I passed the remainder of the night most miserably, though, on the whole, we all managed to turn out pretty fresh at muster. After

parade we were induced, by the representations of the old volunteers, to discard our heavy military hats, and substitute a light cap, as being more suited to the climate. The old volunteers, I may remark, wore no uniform, but had adopted a costume partly Spanish, partly American; nothing but their weapons and their belts, except, perhaps, the dexterity with which they handled the former, denoting that they belonged to the military force.

As soon as I found myself again at liberty, I renewed my excursion into the town, my first visit being to the church, which stood near our quarters. It is a small edifice, strongly built, and of simple style; the only ornaments consisting of a few mouldings over the gothic porch, and on each side of it a niche, intended to contain the statue of a saint. The walls in the interior are white-washed over, and were, when I saw them, extremely dingy and dirty. They are ornamented with paintings, very indifferent copies of celebrated originals: one of these represented the passion of Christ; another, the

temptation of St. Anthony. The latter was full of grotesque and grinning spectres, interspersed with females in a state of classic nudity, but whose blandishments I think it argued the best possible taste on St. Anthony's part to resist. I also noticed a very beautiful figure of the lifeless body of the Saviour, enclosed in a glass case; I was, however, not a little surprised at the barbarous taste that had directed the arrangement of the accessories. The figure lay on a stiff and ungraceful couch, formed of the richest and most costly stuffs, but so thick and modern in design as immediately to dissipate all those serious ideas which the real beauties of the work were calculated to inspire. It was just such an effect as might be produced by draping one of the old Greek models in satin and Brussels lace. But this was not the only incongruity observable. The virgin was represented in modern attire, with a bunch of artificial flowers in her hand, and the altar itself was decorated with all the primitive colours, without the slightest attempt at

blending or harmony. There was an organ-loft, but the only musical instrument that it contained was a huge drum, on which I found written in English, "This is the drum belonging to the Ontario, which made such a noise in the South Seas."

On attending service on the following Sunday, I must confess I was not a little startled at the character of the musical selections, with which the devotions of the congregation (almost exclusively composed of females) were enlivened. The instruments consisted of a guitar, a violin, and a flute; and, during the usual pauses in the ritual, we were alternately entertained with the piquant air of "Yankee Doodle," and the solemn national anthem of "Hail, Columbia." I could not but admire the inimitable self-possession of the French consul, whose features were screwed up into an absorbed and intense devotional expression, which, by the unnatural rigidity of the facial muscles, was evidently assumed to keep down the latent explosion that he had temporarily succeeded in smothering.

Surrounding the church are the remains of an extensive *adobè*, or mud building, which formerly served for the purposes of a mission. The scenery in the neighbourhood is of an exceedingly pleasing and even picturesque character. Close to the church, and running out in the direction of the bay, lies a large and beautiful sheet of water, shut in at one side by some steep but verdant hills, studded here and there with cottages. The road to San Francisco runs through a small valley, lying between these hills and the church; and the country, on either side, presented very much the aspect of the park scenery of England, with this exception, that the trees were, in general, of a more stunted character. The illusion was rendered more complete by the rich green by which the slopes were clothed, the winter being at its close, and the vegetable world refreshed by the copious rains that had fallen. The stunted appearance of the trees near the coast, and the inclination which they take from the sea, naturally lead to the conclusion that they are affected by continuous

and powerful winds from the north-east and south-east.

In strolling through the woods, I stumbled upon a small cemetery, intended, I presume, exclusively for foreigners, there being but few, if any, Spanish names inscribed upon the tombstones. Here lay the remains of a great many of the crew of the Columbus vessel of war; and a feeling of sadness stole over me when I reflected that, like those poor fellows, I might be destined to lay my bones in some sequestered and lonely nook like this, thousands of leagues distant from my family and friends. And yet for those who are epicures in such matters, no prettier spot could be found, the scenery around being of that pleasing and tranquil character which we love to associate with the memory of the dead.

In returning to the town by the San Francisco road, I encountered a yoke of oxen and waggon, of a most primitive and curious build. The wheels are generally formed of the hardest and toughest kind of wood, cut horizontally from the trunk of some immense tree, and

forming one solid piece, rarely, if ever, shod with iron, to prevent them wearing. The axle-tree, which is also of wood, is at least ten inches thick, the part on which the wheel rests being cut down and rounded to a diameter of about six. This is crossed by three heavy beams running parallel with the wheels, the centre beam extending a considerable distance beyond the main body of the conveyance. The beams are fastened together by means of cross pieces, and by being partially sunk into the axle. Staves are then nailed perpendicularly all round, and strengthened by others laid horizontally upon them, so as to form the body of the carriage. The oxen are attached to the projecting beam already described, and which stretches as far as their heads, by means of a yoke composed of a heavy piece of wood, about six or eight inches in width, the edge being hollowed out at a convenient distance to receive the heads of the two animals. In yoking the oxen, this cumbrous headpiece is placed at the extremity of the neck, just behind the horns, to which

it is firmly tied by long strips of raw hide passed several times round. A strong rope is then fastened round the centre of the yoke, between the heads of the oxen, and the latter having been backed in, one at each side of the centre beam, the latter, heavy as it is, is raised up and tied to the yoke, the immense weight keeping down the heads of the oxen in a manner painful to witness. I have often been surprised at the prodigious strength of these animals; for, heavy of draught as are these conveyances, they can draw enormous loads in addition.

CHAPTER V.

Life in Monterey—A Californian café and its incidents—Yankee sharpness, *versus* tropical blood—The Indians of Monterey and Mount Carmel—*Agrémens* of a promenade, with a canine accompaniment—Trade and agriculture—Education—Equestrian skill and equipments of a Californian cavalier—Mode of taming the wild horses and mules of the country—Feeling of the population towards the Americans—General Castro—Aristocratic distinctions—An old campaigning dodge—Arrival at San José—Siege of the old quartel—Departure for La Paz.

In the evening I strolled into Abrigo's, the principal, indeed, I believe, the only *café restaurant* in the town. Its pretensions in point of accommodation were of a very humble order, being limited to one tolerable sized, and two very small rooms, the latter of which were exclusively devoted to gambling. There were two billiard-tables, but, although well skilled in the European game,

and possessing a profound knowledge of all the angles of the table, the Californians seem in general to prefer a peculiar game of their own, which is played somewhat after the following fashion: ten wooden pins are set upright in the centre of the table, and with three balls, the spot, the white, and the red, the player takes his chance of either upsetting a pin or holing a ball, either of which adds two to his score. If at one stroke he can manage to knock down the ten pins, he counts fifty; but such a *coup de main* as this is not of very frequent occurrence.

Shortly after I entered, an American gentleman, who had just arrived from Mazatlan, challenged one of the signors to play him for twenty-five dollars. The bet was accepted, and the money lost by the challenger. Upon this the latter appeared greatly chagrined, and said, as he was putting by his queue—

"If I had the money with me, I shouldn't mind playing you for five hundred dollars."

"Don't let that be any obstacle," said an old gentleman, who, it was subsequently

whispered, was some relative of the Yankee, "I will lend you the money."

The Californian, deceived by the easiness of his previous victory, eagerly accepted the second wager, and the countrymen of the respective parties crowded into the room to watch the result. The American played at first with indifferent success, but with the most perfect command of his temper, while his adversary trembled with excitement, although, by his scornful manner, it was evident he felt confident of his own superiority. At last the critical point of the game was reached; and the American, who, it was apparent to most of us, was only amusing himself at the expense of his opponent, quietly took the cigar out of his mouth, and applying himself seriously to his work, bowled the whole fifty out without stopping.

The excitement of this little incident over, I went into the *monté*, or gambling-rooms, which were crowded with players. There was a pile of money in the centre of each table amounting to several hundred dollars, and

against the banks the bystanders were betting in sums varying from the value of a shilling up to fifty dollars. One of the players, a fine, handsome-looking Californian, had just been stripped of every dollar he possessed, and was making the round of the persons present, in order to try and borrow the means of again wooing the smiles of the fickle goddess. He was, however, too little known, and too reckless a player, to render this, at all times a difficult, on this occasion, an easy task. No one appearing disposed to assist him, he handed round a blue cloak of the finest cloth, and offered it to the highest bidder.

On expressing my surprise to an American beside me that so gentlemanly and elegant-looking a man should thus demean himself before so many people, he burst into a horse laugh, and told me that it was evident that I was a new importation, for that such scenes were of every day occurrence. "In fact," continued he, "when I want to buy a horse, saddle, spurs, or even a *serapa*, I come here,

and as soon as I see a Spaniard thoroughly pigeoned, and eager to try his luck again, which is pretty generally the case, I go outside and take a squint at his beast and its trappings. After lounging about for a while, out comes the Don on his way home, railing against his ill fortune, and ready to sell his soul to the devil himself, for the means of repairing it. The tempter presents himself in the shape of your humble servant, and as I am about as good a hand at a bargain as the respectable old gentleman in question, I generally get what I want at less than a third of its value. A Californian gambler will sell everything he possesses, if you once get his dander up."

The Indians of Monterey and the neighbouring mission of Mount Carmel are the most hideous-looking creatures that it is possible to imagine. They are very dark, indeed I may almost say black, with a slight tinge of copper colour; the features are, in all other respects, as purely African in their cast, the nose being large and flat, the cheek-bones salient, the lips thick and wide, and the forehead as low as is

consistent with a faint supposition of the existence of a brain, to which their pretensions are miserably small. They have long flowing black hair, descending almost to the waist, and, like the Californians, the whitest and most regular teeth I have ever beheld. They are peculiarly filthy and licentious in their habits, and seem to have picked up nothing from their Spanish masters but their vices. In fine weather, they are continually to be seen in the streets of Monterey in a state of the most deplorable intoxication; fighting, gambling, and drinking, forming the sum total of their occupations.

At the time of my visit, they were quite a nuisance in the place; but, great as was the annoyance they occasioned, it was nothing compared to that experienced from the dogs that swarmed in the town and neighbourhood, and which reminded one forcibly of a Turkish village. Wherever you went, you encountered them in large troops; and at night it was impossible to walk three steps without a fierce and snarling muzzle menacing you out of a

doorway, as if you had been detected in the contemplation of a burglary. It required the exercise of some nerve, and a more intimate acquaintance with the peculiarities of these noisy animals, before I felt at all at ease as to their capacities for mischief. They are generally ill-shapen and ugly mongrels, fond of showing their teeth, but so cowardly, that one man with a good stick can put five hundred of them to flight. It is a rare thing to see a good dog in this part of the country, although several attempts have been made to introduce a superior breed.

Mònterey, at the period of which I write, was considered the capital of California, but its trade was exceedingly limited, it being rare to see more than one vessel in the harbour until the arrival of the Americans. The shops bear no external evidence of their character, sign-boards being superfluities in a place where each man's *locale*, occupation, and circumstances, are as well known as in a gossiping country village. The articles most in demand, as is natural with a vain and showy people,

are wearing apparel, personal ornaments, and firearms, more particularly the rifle, none of which the Californians manufacture themselves.

There is very little land under cultivation in the vicinity of Monterey, but still there is no lack of potatoes and other vegetables. That which strikes the foreigner most is the utter neglect in which the soil is left, and the indifference with which the most charming sites are regarded. In the hands of the English or Americans, Monterey would be a beautiful town, adorned with gardens and orchards, and surrounded by picturesque walks and drives. The natives are, however, unfortunately, too ignorant to appreciate, and too indolent even to attempt, such improvements.

Education is far from being general, even amongst the higher classes, it being considered quite an accomplishment to read and write. There are no schools, either Spanish or American: and it is therefore not to be wondered at that, in the absence of mental, the Californians should devote themselves to the physical

exercises, in which they excel. As cavaliers, no nation can approach them in dexterity; the proficiency which they have attained in the management of the horse being really wonderful. Their movements are graceful in the extreme, though bordering on the theatrical; but their love of display and effect is so continuously sustained by an apparently reckless daring, that, however superciliously the stranger may be disposed to regard them at first, he is soon lost in surprise and admiration. Everything connected with the accoutrements of the horse and his rider is calculated to confirm this impression on the mind of the spectator, an air of wild grandeur pervading the arrangements of both.

The hoosti, or saddle-tree, is made of wood, the pummel being crowned with a heavy knob, and covered with leather of a very strong description, and in colour greatly resembling parchment. Both the pummel and hind part of the saddle are of extraordinary height, the former reaching above the rider's waist. The saddle-tree itself is covered over with two

pieces of leather from three to four feet square, the outer one stamped with beautifully figured designs, and, in many instances, enriched with handsome embroidery. They are slipped over the pommel and hinder part of the saddle, by means of slits cut in the leather, and form a very comfortable seat.

The stirrups are cut out of a solid piece of hard wood, about eight inches wide and three thick, with two holes, one for the foot and the other for the stirrup-leathers, which are unusually wide and strong. I have heard many Americans say that these stirrups are preferable to their own, being easier to catch while the horse is in full gallop, should they happen to slip off. The head-stall is usually of rich and fanciful design, and, in most instances, ornamented with chased silver; and a powerful bit, worked by an equally strong bridle, made of plaited horse-hair, serves to keep under subjection the most violent horse, as he must either yield to its control, or have his jaw broken by it. To the end of this bridle is attached a short, heavy whip of plaited leather,

with two cutting thongs; and round the pommel of the saddle, underneath the knob to which I have alluded, to obviate the danger of its slipping off, is coiled the *lasso*, a rope of the strongest fabric, and composed of the same materials as the bridle.

The costume of the rider generally consists of a glazed *sombrero*, with a leaf six or eight inches in width, and secured on the head by a string passing from the sides underneath the chin. His shoulders and body are protected by the *serapa*, and his limbs by *calcineros*, both of which garments I have already described. Round his waist he wears a red or blue sash, which serves the purpose of braces; the freedom of his movements being inconsistent with that inconvenient auxiliary of European costume.

In person, the Californian *caballero* is generally tall and graceful, with jet black hair, having a slight tendency to curl, a brown complexion, expressive black eyes, and features decidedly Roman in their cast. When fully equipped, mounted, and inspired by the ardour

A WATERING PLACE—LOWER CALIFORNIA.

of the chase, I cannot conceive a more perfect type of manly beauty and chivalrous bearing.

Such is the force of example, that many of the Americans and other foreigners who had been residing a little time in the country, and who had had but little previous experience as equestrians, became admirable riders, in some instances but little inferior to the natives themselves. Our men became such enthusiasts on the subject, that they devoted the greater part of their pay to the purchase of horses and saddles.

The manner in which the wild horses of California are tamed is sufficiently curious to merit some description. A party of well-mounted horsemen rides out in search of them; and, when they find a sufficient number of them together, they surround and chase them in a body into the *correl*, where the gate is purposely left open to receive them. Were they to attempt to chase them singly, or even in small numbers, they would find great difficulty in catching them; but, by driving them in large troops, they are the more willing to

follow the direction given by their pursuers; and their movements embarrassing each other, escape is more difficult. The animals having been chased inside the fence, the *ranchero* selects the horse that pleases him most, and the lasso is thrown round his neck. He is then led or driven out of the *correl*, and, being thrown down, his legs are tied; a leathern blind is attached to the *hackamore* placed ready for that purpose on his forehead, and a strap fastened loosely round his body. The lasso is then tied to the *hackamore* immediately beneath the mouth, and he is thus completely secured. His legs are set free after this operation, but he is still held by the *lasso*. He now begins to kick and plunge furiously, but soon getting tired of this amusement, the person who holds the *lasso* draws it in gradually with a gentle strain until he can reach the animal's head, which he pats as soothingly as possible. He then draws the blind down over his eyes, and jumps on his back, slipping his knees between the strap and the horse's sides. This operation is gene-

rally performed by an Indian, who is accustomed to ride in this fashion without either saddle or blanket. The blind is now lifted, and the horse, unused to the burden that he bears, begins rearing and plunging again, and keeps it up sometimes for a whole hour. All this time the Indian is trying to guide him, but at first without success. At last the animal gets exhausted, and moves along with greater docility. The rider then takes him home, and, choosing a spot where there is sufficient grass, sinks a strong stake of wood in it, and, attaching the animal to it, leaves him alone for the remainder of that day. On the following, and, perhaps, for eight successive days, according to circumstances, he repeats the same operation; and then, if he considers him sufficiently broken in, puts on the saddle, his eyes being still kept covered. When the saddle is first put on, the trainer does not mount him, but allows him to kick and plunge about until he gets a little familiarized to it. He then rides the horse with a saddle for a few days, and puts on a bridle.

He is still led, however, by the *hackamore*, the object of putting on the bridle being merely to accustom him to it. In this way some horses may be tamed in a month, whilst others will take two or three. Others, again, can never be broken in sufficiently for any ordinary rider to mount them without danger. Of the wild horses subjected to this process of training, at least one fourth are killed, and a still larger proportion seriously injured.

The wild mules are still more difficult to break in; the mode of training is, however, pretty much the same, with this exception, that it is more violent and of longer duration.

Horses, mules, billiards, and *monté*, I found to be the all-engrossing subjects of conversation; and it was not without some little difficulty that I could obtain sufficient *data* to enable me to form a correct idea of the domestic habits of the better classes. It may be readily supposed that the Californians could not be very well affected towards those who had come, as it were, to conquer and appropriate their country; and the military

were, of course, particularly obnoxious. The garrison had long been apprehensive of an attack; and, shortly previous to my arrival, a report had reached Colonel Mason, that a body of men under General Castro, a gentleman of good family and great personal influence, was marching upon Monterey with hostile intentions. The Americans were kept, night and day, under arms, and a severe conflict was anticipated. The General, however, came to the conclusion, that the attempt on Monterey would be unsuccessful, and wisely wrote to the American Governor to say, that, if the latter would ensure the safety of his person and property, he would abandon all further designs against him. He subsequently rode into the town, attended by only two or three persons; and, in an interview with Colonel Mason, expressed himself in such amicable and friendly terms, that the latter treated him with kindness and liberality, granting him all that he had demanded, and securing to him the full enjoyment of his personal liberty.

The example given by General Castro was attended with a good effect upon others, and all idea of fighting was abandoned for the present. Still, however, there lurked in the breasts of the people a strong prejudice, which the conduct of the Americans themselves tended greatly to embitter. I have frequently seen a quiet and respectable party of the natives intruded upon by drunken soldiers or sailors, who, not content with observing or partaking of the festivities, to the enjoyment of which all strangers who conduct themselves properly are welcome by the usages of the country, insisted upon monopolizing the privileges of the fête, and otherwise outraging the feelings of the people. Up to the time of my visit, such had been, generally speaking, the conduct and character of the foreigners who had visited California; and it is not to be wondered at, that a people so isolated and so naturally courteous should have regarded the Americans and English somewhat in the light of savages. Owing to this feeling, which seemed to pervade the entire population, very

little opportunity was afforded me of forming a correct judgment of the real character and opinions of the upper classes. One fact, however, was sufficiently obvious, namely, that the old Spanish aristocratic distinctions are maintained with infinitely more rigour than in the parent country; the lines of demarcation between the descendant of the Castilian and the most civilized Indian being as broad and impassable as those existing between the planters of the southern states and their negro slaves. Yet there is nothing like slavery in the country, and both Spaniards and Indians live on the best understanding together.

Having alluded to General Castro's capitulation in terms that may possibly lead to inferences unfavourable to his character, I think it but justice to add, that there is not the slightest ground for supposing that it was dictated by any but the most honourable motives. This gentleman is the very beau ideal of the Spanish race—handsome and dignified in person, and as brave, hospitable,

and generous in character, as the hidalgo should be.

We had remained about twelve days in Monterey, during which time the ship Isabella had discharged part of her cargo, when our hopes of a little repose after our long voyage were suddenly disappointed by an order issued on parade, that, in consequence of the increasing disturbances in Lower California, companies C and D, with some sixty or eighty men from the detachment, were to embark on the 4th of March on board this vessel, and proceed to Lower California, to join the companies A and B, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Burton. At this time, we could ill be spared in Monterey, where the Americans still entertained apprehensions of a rising on the part of the population; but, as the demand for our presence in the lower country was pressing, the lesser necessity yielded to the greater. Some of the married men, who felt little disposition for active service, made strenuous efforts to obtain permission to remain, but the old Colonel knew his

duty too well to listen to their representations. Orders were, however, given that the women should be left behind, and that, during the absence of their husbands, they should be supported by the Government.

Captain N——, who had been for some time under arrest for various little military peccadilloes, such, for instance, as shooting some Indians without the necessary forms, was now liberated, and placed at the head of his company. His men would gladly have left him behind, but he was known to be an efficient officer, and the best disciplinarian in the force, having received a regular military education at West-Point. He was therefore considered well qualified to head the expedition, men of capacity being rare amongst us; and I have reason to think the old Governor was far from being displeased at getting rid of him.

We all embarked on the day appointed, and on getting on board, the lately arrived detachments were rather unpleasantly convinced that, if the members of company D were not very old, they were, at all events,

very experienced campaigners. Some of them, under pretence of looking after the baggage, had got into the vessel before us, and secured the most comfortable berths for themselves, by going to bed in the afternoon, and affecting to sleep until we had taken up our respective quarters.

During our passage down, we underwent constant drilling, and attained great dexterity in the use of our arms. As D was a cavalry company, we were roused every morning from our slumbers by the sound of a bugle, which soon became as intolerable as the drum of the detachment. One morning, to our great contentment, the instrument was missing, and no one was sufficiently interested in its recovery to second the efforts of the Captain to discover the mode of its disappearance.

We coasted along until we arrived in the latitude of Santa Barbara, when the weather became exceedingly warm and agreeable on deck. About the 18th of March we reached the roadstead of San José, where we found at anchor the sloop of war Ciane, commanded

by Captain Dupont, which had put in to obtain a supply of fresh provisions. Here our Captain went on shore, to ascertain whether we should land at this point, or proceed to La Paz. We learned from the sailors who came on board that there had been a good deal of fighting, but that the town was then in the possession of the Americans.

It appeared that a handful of men, composed of about twenty-five marines and a few sailors and volunteers, had stood a severe siege in the old quartel, or barracks, having been surrounded for several weeks by a large body of the enemy. During this period, a number of the native women had taken refuge with the Americans, and the whole party had suffered incredible hardships. Most of the cattle had been driven from the neighbourhood of the town, and in order to prevent themselves from famishing, a portion of the little garrison was obliged to sally out, whenever an opportunity presented itself, to lasso and bring in a bullock, and, indeed, even to obtain a supply of water, the springs being at

some distance from the fort. These expeditions, although cautiously managed, were attended with great danger, the Californian sharp-shooters lurking under every available cover in the neighbourhood, in order to surprise and bring down the Americans.

On one occasion, a small party of the Yankees, about seven or eight in number, headed by Lieutenant Duncan, was completely surrounded by a large body of the enemy. It was proposed that they should endeavour to cut their way through them, but the majority considered that it would be madness to think of it, and resolved on yielding themselves prisoners. They were immediately sent off into the interior of the country. Encouraged by this partial success, the Californians kept up the attack on the fort with great spirit, but made little or no progress. Lieutenant M'Clanahan, who stood at the base of the flag-staff, on the parapet of the fort, carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, jumped upon the rampart, and waved his sword in defiance. He was instantly struck

in the head by a ball, and fell back a corpse. There was only one really brave man amongst the natives—a Colonel, whose name I cannot at this moment call to mind, but which deserves to be remembered with honour. This gentleman determined to take the fort by storm, and accordingly made a desperate attack, in which he distinguished himself by his reckless bravery. At the very moment when his efforts seemed on the point of being crowned with success, he was killed by a musket-ball, and his death had such a dispiriting effect on his men, that they instantly beat a precipitate retreat.

The natives had now retired into their strongholds in the mountains, having lost a great number of their men, both by death and capture; and the first thing we heard on our arrival was, that they were preparing for a general and simultaneous attack. The crew of the Ciane having, in the mean time, come to the assistance of the garrison, the Americans considered themselves in full and permanent possession of the town. Our services

were therefore deemed of less importance here than in La Paz, a town of considerable importance at the other side of Cape St. Lucas, in the Gulf of California; and again embarking on board the Isabella, we reached the latter place on the 22nd March.

CHAPTER VI.

La Paz—A bivouac in a church—A change—"Black Jack"—Preparations for a march against the enemy—The march—Californian beds—Ranchés—A little story about "Black Jack."

Paz is of great extent and beauty, and possesses a large number of rich pearl oyster-beds, the pearl fishery having at one time supplied the chief article of traffic on this part of the coast. The Indians of La Paz are very expert divers, and were allowed a per-centage upon all the oysters they could fetch up from the beds; but, since the breaking out of the war, the fishery, and the trade which depended on it, had been, the one utterly neglected, and the other completely ruined, all the men capable of bearing arms having been impressed into the military service by Penada, the Mexican general. Judging from

the millions of oyster-shells I saw piled up on the beach, the trade must have been of no small importance.

The country around the bay of La Paz is elevated and picturesque, though rugged; the soil being composed principally of rock and sand, wildly and irregularly covered with the most prickly species of cacti, stunted bushes, and shrubs of sunburnt hue. The cocoa and the palm-tree rear their giant heads far above their forest brethren, amongst which they are abundantly interspersed, whilst here and there shoots up an enormous cactus, enhancing the novelty of the scene, and imparting to it quite an Oriental character. These were my first impressions of La Paz, as I gazed at it from the deck of our vessel, now slowly sailing into the harbour.

On the 22nd, we entered the town, marching up the principal street, which is very prettily and regularly built; on each side, at the outer edge of the *trottoirs*, were rows of green trees, whose overhanging foliage afforded us luxurious shelter from the intensely hot

rays of the sun. One of the houses I observed was completely dismantled. It had been of superior dimensions and architecture, and belonged to the Mexican Governor, but was pulled down by the natives during the recent fight, in consequence of his siding with the Americans. At the extreme end of the street was a stone wall, or parapet, constructed so as to form a seat, and extending almost across the thoroughfare; it also had gaps in it, to permit the passage of the inhabitants, and beyond it were the remains of a beautiful orchard.

Some of the houses were, as at Monterey, built of *adobè*, plastered over and whitewashed, with flat roofs of the same material, but surrounded by parapetted walls, which adapted them, in case of need, to the purpose of defence. Further on were numerous dilapidated dwellings, *adobè* and bamboo; devastated orchards; gardens trampled over and parched up for want of the husbandman's care; vegetables and fruit in abundance, trodden into rottenness; branches of trees broken and half burnt,

strewed about everywhere; whilst in places might be seen a black circle of charred embers, denoting where a fire had been kindled, and around which lay yet scattered the fragments of the last feast or orgie its blaze had enlivened.

The rude soldier, whether Californian or American, had spared nothing, however beautiful, whilst indulging in his reckless spirit of hatred and revenge. Nevertheless, judging of La Paz from what remained of it, it presented evidences of elegance and civilization to which Monterey was an utter stranger, and which I could attribute only to its greater proximity to Mexico, and to the consequent increased facilities of communication with that city. I confess, when I beheld the ravages war had made, that I regretted the Americans should ever have set foot upon the soil.

We were well received and entertained by the volunteers belonging to two other companies stationed here, whom we found very agreeable fellows, and remarkably spruce, a fact worth recording, because neatness is not

a characteristic of the American volunteer. Some of them accompanied me to the fort, which is situated on the brow of a hill. It is a good-sized building, with a large area in front, protected by mounds of earth and sand, on the outside of which are sunk, at regular distances of about ten feet, strong wooden stakes, supporting a heavy iron chain, forming a kind of breastwork.

There were several dirty tents scattered about, which had evidently seen some service; and additional accommodation for about thirty men had been contrived, by constructing by the side of one of the houses, a row of huts—apartments they were called—formed of sticks and brushwood. To the extreme left stood the Catholic church, which, having been stripped by the Californians of all its ornaments, was now converted into a barrack, to the right of which was the *correl*, or *cavallard*, where the government horses were kept. To this church I, with others of my company, were detailed; and accordingly we took up our quarters there in the evening, arranging our

boxes and knapsacks to serve us in lieu of beds.

I was fortunate enough to fall asleep, and to sleep soundly, in spite of the ribald merriment that made the walls of the church ring with peals of blasphemous laughter. I awoke much refreshed, and was able to attend muster in good time. Not so my companions, who presently came straggling into the ranks by twos and threes, some rubbing their eyes, some gaping and stretching, others again less than half-dressed, and more still in their fatigue dress, but all equally careless of discipline, chatting and laughing as they stood in the ranks, and in the same breath cursing the drummer and his drum, and the military service.

I have already shown, by narrating instances of open insubordination, that such irregularities as these were amongst the least serious evils of the American volunteer system, and I soon learned that they were developed on a far more extensive scale in Mexico than in California. Many of the companies held the authority of

their superiors and the regulations of the military service in utter contempt, alleging that the officers were men whom they had selected to command them in the field only, and who had no right to govern their actions, save in the hour of danger; whilst, as regarded the rules of military service, the volunteers were, by their very condition, not bound to conform to them. The disorganization and confusion resulting from such a state of things may be easily conceived; but it is doing the men the barest justice to add, that, when the hour came for action, they showed themselves worthy of their country, and, by their deeds of gallantry on numerous occasions, emulated, if they did not frequently outvie, the prowess of the regulars.

I found the inhabitants of La Paz more intelligent than the people of Monterey, whilst the habits of the lower classes were even more simple and primitive. The chief articles of food amongst the latter are beef, *tortillas*, and *penochè*. These *tortillas* are a kind of cake made of ground Indian corn, and the *penochè*

is a mixture of coarse flour and sugar, made up into very hard square or round pieces. I have frequently seen an Indian, or a Californian of the lower class, breakfast off a couple of these *tortillas*, weighing together not more than two ounces and a half, and a piece of this sugar and flour, previously to undergoing the most severe physical labour; to wit, the making of *adobès*, which are bricks of wet clay that he must first dig out of the pit before moulding them into the requisite form, generally an oblong, measuring two feet by eighteen inches, the last process being to stack them so as to permit of their being thoroughly dried in the burning sun. The condition of the labouring classes in the lower country is indeed deplorable. They perform an amount of labour which, in such a climate, no white man could accomplish, and their wages are far from commensurate to such toil. The Indians of this region are better looking and more intelligent than their brethren of the upper country, their complexion not being quite so dark, nor their features so coarse.

The day after my arrival, I ascertained that I and other of my companions were enrolled in another company, commanded by the officer before-mentioned, whose severity had gained him the nickname of "Black Jack," and that we were to hold ourselves in readiness to set out, in the course of a few days more, on an expedition against the enemy. In consequence of this change, I shifted my quarters to a large house in the principal street, nearly opposite the one I have alluded to as having formed the residence of the former Governor. The bustle incidental to the announcement of a march into the interior can scarcely be realized through the medium of description. First, there was a general rush everywhere in search of canteens, knapsacks, saddles, bridles, spurs, thongs of leather, scraps of rope, pieces of raw hide, nails, and anything and everything that might possibly or impossibly come into use for the equipment of man, horse, mule, or other beast, which, in default of the two latter, would have to do their service. Then there was scuffling, and shuffling, and pushing, and swearing, and

laughing, and talking, and singing, and whistling — ay, and dancing, or capering about, less in joy than in excitement; and packing, and unpacking, and re-packing; stitching, and darning, and cobbling; a running from house to house of officers and men, all intermingling and jostling, and a prying into every corner, crook, cranny, and crevice; rummaging of cupboards and chests of drawers; upsetting of trunks and boxes; peeping under bedsteads and into beds; poking into dusty lumber-closets, and exploring of the most singular places; all this to hunt up necessaries to which we had not the smallest right, and which the natives most unwillingly surrendered to us, in spite of written engagements on our part to return the same—*when we came back*—or give an equivalent in money. But, notwithstanding our exertions, we came off most miserably, though we ransacked every *ranché* throughout the neighbourhood. We were obliged to make the best of what we had, and prepared ourselves for the start accordingly, being the most poorly equipped detachment that had

for many years set out on any military expedition.

We learned that the enemy were quartered in great numbers at Todos Santos, preparing for a descent upon La Paz and San José, a project which our Colonel resolved to frustrate by anticipating their attack and scattering their forces. About eleven on the night of the third day after our arrival, our company received orders to march, and proceeded to the parade-ground of the fort, where we were joined by about a hundred and twenty more men from two other companies, the remainder being left to guard the town against surprise. We soon formed into marching order, those in front being mounted on horses or mules, and those in the rear following on foot. I pitied them much as we proceeded.

It was a glorious moonlight night, and the men's weapons glittered like streaks of silver flashing through the deep foliage of the tangled brushwood through which we had to force our way. At first we got on tolerably well, in spite of the hillocks of sand, over which we either

stumbled or sunk into knee-deep; of rocky eminences which we clambered with considerable difficulty; and of prickly bushes and plants, which, shooting up in every direction, sorely annoyed the horsemen, but severely punished the unlucky pedestrians, inflicting the severest scratches on their hands and faces, and lacerating their feet even through their shoes. O'Reilly vowed that the road "led direct to purgatory;" an opinion in which, notwithstanding the diversity of our religious opinions, the majority of us were disposed to coincide.

We had long left the town behind us, and our rapid march had brought us to one of those roads peculiar to California, and the advantages of which I have never been able to appreciate. They are just wide enough to allow of one horseman to advance, but not to permit of his wheeling round, unless by an exercise of ingenuity which it is not so certain that his horse or his mule will always be disposed to second. Along this road, then, we continued our march in single or Indian file, our native guides

warning us of any obstruction that existed in the shape of a huge limb of a tree, or awkward drift of sand. Towards morning, we halted at a convenient opening, and threw ourselves upon the ground, to snatch a few minutes' repose.

"Holy St. Anthony, what's that?" exclaimed O'Reilly, jumping to his feet, and scratching the nether part of his person; "as sure as you live, boys, we have got amongst old acquaintances."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before a general manifestation of similar discomfort burst from all who had, on the first impulse, cast themselves on the ground. We soon discovered that such portions of our persons as had touched the soil were literally stuck full of a species of prickly-nut, the produce of a kind of cactus, with which it was covered. We experienced some difficulty in disengaging ourselves from these most unpleasant attachments, but, having done so, and cleared a convenient space, we again threw ourselves down, and, in spite of the intolerable

pain we were suffering from the punctures we had received, endeavoured to close our eyes.

But our troubles had only commenced; for we soon discovered that the soil teemed with a numerous family of vermin, so anxious to be on terms of the most intimate acquaintanceship with us, that rest was impossible. Fleas of so large a growth, and of so voracious a propensity, I never again wish to see, much less to feel; whilst the ants and wood-bugs were of a development quite startling, the odour of the latter being on a corresponding scale. It was a relief to hear the word "march" given. We resumed our journey with more alacrity than we had commenced it, and proceeded until we had accomplished about twenty-five miles, when, it being broad day, and a *ranché*, or farm-house at hand, we again halted.

This *ranché* consisted of a small shanty, constructed partly of sticks, partly of leaves, and partly of the bamboo-cane, and looked like a mere speck, it being situated on the summit of a rugged and frowning steep of some sixty feet in height, composed of rock and

clay. Beneath it was a sandy flat of considerable extent, which seemed, indeed, to be only an enlarged continuation of our route. On the other side of this flat lay a series of sandy hills and valleys, adorned with the most splendid and enormous cacti, some of which must have exceeded thirty feet in height, growing perpendicularly on long and immensely thick stalks, the leaves—if leaves they can be called—of unwieldy bulk, but otherwise devoid of the characteristic eccentricities of this tribe of plants. In the total absence of vegetation in this part, these prickly cacti offered great relief to the eye, and harmonized well with the general character of the scenery.

We halted at the base of the steep, and, looking up, saw some females, evidently watching our movements with some anxiety. One of our men soon discovered the ascent, and, clambering to the summit, informed the women what we wanted, at the same time giving earnest of a readiness to pay for it. Their application was successful; and, on their

return, myself and one or two others followed them down the declivities on the road-side, turning in and out of the rocks, until we reached a small valley, completely sheltered from cursory observation, where the live stock was grazing off a patch of meagre herbage, which, from its being, with the exception of a few trees, almost the only bit of green we could see—for we were now surrounded by barren hills — was quite refreshing to the wearied eye. From the fissures of the rocks there flowed, with a gentle ripple, a thin, limpid stream, which, falling into a hollow at the end of this little valley, there formed a small pond where the cattle could slake their thirst. It was, most probably, in consequence of there being here a few scanty patches of herbage and a supply of water convenient, that the people to whom the *ranché* belonged had been induced to settle here; for none but those who have travelled through this wilderness of a region can appreciate the value of a little grass to sustain a few animals, and of a rill of water to irrigate a kitchen-garden.

MOUNTAIN SCENERY—LOWER CALIFORNIA.

Out of their stock of cattle we chose a cow, which was immediately driven up the sides of the hill to the flat upon which our party had halted, and there lassoed and shot. The carcass was forthwith stripped of its hide, and divided into quarters, one of which was allotted to every fourth of our number. Fires of dry sticks and brushwood were soon kindled, bowie-knives drawn, and, every man helping himself to his share, in turn became his own cook.

The "Californian gridiron" now came into active and general use. It is a straight stick cut from a tree, stripped of its bark, and whittled to a sharp point. Several pieces of beef are "speared" upon this; and, whilst one point rests on a piece of wood yet unburnt, and is held by one of the cooks, another turns the meat until the slices are done. Several of our men made the ramrod of their musket serve the same purpose, and subsequently got a reprimand from our commander, Black Jack, in consequence of their being unable to clean and brighten it up again; the opera-

tion cost them many an hour's hard labour, as I well remember.

Having again incidentally alluded to "Black Jack," I may as well here narrate a painful episode which was related to us, as we sat eating our food, by one of the volunteers who had been a long time in his company, and who had come with us from Monterey. He was one of the parties concerned in the expedition I am about to refer to, and which will illustrate the summary vengeance with which, when they are suspected of any offence, the poor Indians are visited, without formality of trial or proof of guilt. As nearly as I can remember, I give the substance of our comrade's narrative.

Whilst his company was staying at Monterey, some horses were stolen from the *cavallard;* and suspicion falling on some Indians whose tribe dwelt in the vicinity, a detachment of men was ordered to go in search of the stolen property, and, at the same time, to survey the country, and suppress any attempt at a rising amongst the natives. During this

excursion, which proved unsuccessful with regard to the recovery of the lost property, of which no trace could be found, one of the men lost the track, and was not again heard of alive. As desertion was out of the question, it was conjectured he had fallen a prey to the out-lying Indians, in revenge for the invasion of their country; and, on their return to Monterey with this unfortunate intelligence, they received instructions to go out again in search of him. This time, "Black Jack" was of the party. As they were upon the point of setting out, a runner brought news of the missing man. His body had been found cut to pieces, and several arrows sticking in different parts of it. The object of the expedition was now changed: vengeance was the word, and "Black Jack" vowed he would have it. After many days and nights of travelling through regions the most difficult of access, they came upon a party of Indians in the gorges of the lofty mountains of that district; but they denied all knowledge both of the horses and of the murdered man, hinting,

however, that in such a direction some news might be gained from another tribe of Indians, their enemies, and who were most likely to have committed the robbery and the murder. Accordingly their guide and interpreter started off again in the direction indicated; and, in the course of a few days more, the party came up with the Indians, of whom it was in search. On the approach of the strangers, the chiefs advanced and shook hands with the Captain, who returned the compliment, and then informed them of the object of his visit. The chiefs protested they knew nothing about the transaction; it was the first time they had heard it mentioned; they were friendly to the foreigners, whom they feared, and did not wish to offend. "Black Jack," tired of wandering about, told them he did not believe them; they were all of the same colour, and, therefore, all thieves and murderers alike; and he should insist upon the culprits being given up. Again the chiefs remonstrated and protested against the injustice that had been done them; it was

in vain: for the Captain commanded some of the men to take the chiefs into custody. The men hesitated; when one of them, an Irishman, who had long served in the British army, stepped forward and seized the oldest chief, pinning his arms behind him, and the next moment the other was in a similar position. The party was sufficiently numerous to overawe the Indians, and, besides this, well armed; the Indians saw that resistance would be useless, and stood calmly awaiting the result. "Black Jack" pointed to a small space that had been recently cleared, and a firing-party took up its position there. The older chief, perceiving that his time was come, requested permission to speak with his son, who was standing near, and who now advanced. The two took leave of each other with great emotion; and the old man, after embracing his son, said to him—"My son, remember, that from this hour there is blood between us and the pale-faces;" which, as the interpreter informed the party, was equal to an injunction upon the tribe to revenge his

death. The two chiefs then folded their arms, and deliberately stalked to the place of execution — of murder, rather — exhibiting the greatest unconcern, whilst the few men of the tribe looked on in the same impassive manner. In less than another minute all was over, and the two chiefs lay stretched on the ground stone dead; but, scarcely had they fallen, than the remainder of the Indians uttered a loud and terrific yell; and, plunging into the bush, disappeared in search of their companions. The party now began their retreat with great rapidity, but were severely harassed on their way by the Indians, who, assembling in great numbers, waylaid them at every turn, casting showers of arrows amongst them, and otherwise assailing them, though without effect; their dread of the muskets keeping them beyond the range of their own weapons. Several volleys were discharged amongst the assailants, but, whether with effect or not, could not be ascertained. At length the party reached Monterey without having sustained any loss; but this circum-

stance excited great dissatisfaction amongst all who heard of it, as it was considered that the Captain had acted most unjustly; and when, in the course of the war, single parties were waylaid and cut off in detail, he was always regarded as the cause of the catastrophe, which was attributed to the unslumbering spirit of revenge which the massacre of the two chiefs had aroused amongst the Indian tribes.

CHAPTER VII.

Domestic economy of the Californians — The march resumed — Our animals — An important capture — San Antonio—The Yakee Indians—A mistake—My misfortune —Comforts of a blood-horse—Dr. Freünd's adventure—Todos Santos and the enemy.

To return to our repast. I had occasion to revisit the *ranché* in search of salt, and, taking advantage of the opportunity, made acquaintance with several ingenious native contrivances adapted to the exigencies of their domestic economy. To preserve that scarce article, water, cool and clean, a great desideratum in a torrid climate, and in a country abounding with vermin, and the atmosphere of which is charged with minute particles of sand, the natives select from a tree a branch having three forks, the ends of which they

trim to the convenient length, and, fastening the trimmed branch horizontally to a stout upright cane, slip into this triangular basket the brown clay pitcher containing the water reserved for culinary purposes, the top of which they cover with a piece of wood fitted to it. The whole apparatus is usually placed beneath the overhanging foliage of a tree, or under the shade of a projecting crag. The drinking-cups, or bowls, are formed of the shell or husk of a yellow tropical fruit, scooped out and carefully scraped. The cooking utensils are made of clay, and are of all dimensions. The Indian corn for making their *tortillas* is ground under a flat stone of about eight inches long by three broad, this being worked upon a stone table, averaging in length some eighteen inches by twelve in breadth, and standing upon four stone legs, the hindermost being quite two inches higher than the foremost; so that the surface of the table forms a pretty steep inclined plane, and facilitates the process of grinding, as well as that of separating, the bran from the flour. I

observed several raw hides stretched upon the ground, shaded by a screen of bamboo-cane and leaves; on these the natives indulge in their *siesta.* I also noticed a number of long switches, similarly protected, on which were suspended as many strips of beef as they could hold. When this beef is thoroughly salted and dried, it will keep for a very considerable time, and is admirably adapted for the long journeys which the traveller is frequently obliged to take between one *ranché* and another, when to procure fresh meat is impossible.

I must confess, our party cut a very singular figure as it set out, after resting at this spot. We had all sorts of costumes; some military, some Californian; some wearing a hybrid between the two; others habited after a fashion more decidedly brigandish than anything else; but the majority of us appearing much the worse for our rough journey through the thorns, whilst many were literally in rags; some had thrust the lower portion of their trowsers into their boots, affecting a dashing style as they rode off upon their steeds—sorry

SPECIMEN OF BAMBOO HOUSES IN GENERAL USE IN LOWER CALIFORNIA.

beasts enough for the most part, though others were sleek and in good condition. As for caparisonings, fortunate were those who had succeeded in procuring decent saddles; many had bare saddle-trees, which they had brought in the hope of procuring, by some lucky chance, the necessary covering of leather from the *ranchés;* others rode on a couple of blankets, fastened on their steeds by means of a raw hide-rope passed round their bodies. The contrivances for stirrups were of the most extraordinary kind, and far too numerous and complicated for me to attempt any description of them. To say the truth, we looked like a desperate band of brigands, who had been a long time out on an unsuccessful expedition, and were now prepared for any murderous enterprise that promised well.

Our way lay through the narrowest paths, having on each side thick and thorny bushes, which scratched our faces, and pierced our hands cruelly, whilst the rocks and sands beneath our feet rendered our progress still more painful. Then we had to encounter entangled branches

of trees, whose tiny sprigs had become interlaced, and now formed a complete barrier, which we sometimes experienced the greatest difficulty in overcoming; or sometimes a huge limb would thrust itself across our path, so as to endanger the head or the face of the foremost rider, who, coming suddenly upon it, would sink down on the pommel of his saddle, to avoid a fearful concussion. Emerging from these labyrinths, we would find ourselves upon a long and narrow valley, not exceeding fifty feet in width, covered with loose and deep sand, and frowned upon from both sides by gloomy rocks, which seemed to reach the sky. Travelling, indeed, in this region, under an insufferably hot sun, and over such roads, is the very climax of misery, and loud and frequent were the maledictions invoked upon it, and everything connected with the expedition.

As we threaded our way up and through one of those intricate steep defiles peculiar to mountainous districts, where the rocks around us appeared to have been thrown up and heaped together by some fearful convul-

SKETCH DURING THE WAR—LOWER CALIFORNIA.

sion of nature, I could not but admire the steadiness and sagacity of the mules on which some of our party were mounted. Whilst our horses slipped and stumbled at almost every second step, the sure-footed Californian mules picked their way up the steepest ascents, down the most precipitous declivities, and along the most dangerous ledges, with a certainty and an instinct far beyond the calculations of human foresight. Their powers of endurance, too, far surpassed those of the strongest horses, to which, as beasts of burden or draught, they were also vastly superior; added to this, their hardy nature and hardier habits rendered them better able to support privation; they seemed to enjoy a meal off brambles, the bark of trees, or dried leaves, as much as a feed of corn, or the dried grass of the Indian wheat, whilst the horses would turn from the former with disgust.

We continued our road across the mountains, winding round them, in and out, and along narrow shelves of rocks, from which a single false step would have precipi-

tated him who made it into the deep valley far beneath; never resting but for a few minutes at a time, except at intervals or relays, averaging about twenty-five miles each, when we usually came up to a *ranché*, and refreshed ourselves with fresh meat, and sometimes vegetables and fruit. These *ranchés* generally occupied some picturesque spot, and the sight of them infused new life into the whole party, man and beast; the latter especially, whose instinct seemed to be even superior to the intelligence of our guide, the animals being always first to give us due intimation that we were approaching quarters, by pricking up their ears, pawing and snorting, and increasing their pace. Many of these *ranchés* were built of *adobè*, plastered over and whitewashed, and had good *cavallards*, and well-cultivated gardens, irrigated with much ingenuity. Indeed, it was impossible to contemplate them, contrasting as they did so singularly with the wild scenery around, without astonishment and even admiration at the enterprise which had erected, in regions

so repulsive and ungrateful, these domestic memorials of a tolerably advanced civilization.

We had arrived within about seven miles of San Antonio, at one of the most miserable *ranchés* we had yet seen, when the word was passed to halt; whilst our colonel, with a party of twenty-five men, pushed forward to reconnoitre. They returned in the course of a couple of hours, bringing us intelligence of their having surprised and taken prisoner the Mexican General Penada, one of the chief promoters of the war, who had lingered in the town in consequence of a desperate wound received in one of his hands, during a violent quarrel, followed by a personal rencounter with one of the De Castro family, and a colonel in the Mexican service.

Having resumed our march, and reached the town, we took up our quarters at the lower end of the principal square. We had captured, on our way, three Yakee Indians, who were endeavouring to escape by one of the cross-roads; they were confined in the

guard-house, and a sentry stationed to keep watch over them.

These Yakees of California formed a large portion of a very numerous tribe of Indians in Mexico, who, attracted—as we were informed—by the prospect of plunder, and by the liberal promises held out to them by the Californians at the commencement of the war, had crossed the head of the gulf, and joined the native forces. They are a fierce, dark-complexioned race, though some shades lighter than the Indians of the upper country, to whom they are superior in natural intelligence. Their eyebrows and hair are very black, and the latter hangs in disorder about their head, though it is not permitted to grow to any great length, as is the custom with many other Indian tribes, nor do I believe is it often subjected to the process of combing. Their cheek-bones are high, their nostrils flat and wide, and their mouths large, but amply furnished with brilliantly white teeth. Their physical strength is immense; and, notwithstanding that they are not at all partial to

work—in which respect I do not think they differ very much from the labouring classes of more civilized countries—the amount of fatigue and labour they can endure and accomplish is surprising. Their dress is of course adapted to the climate, and is of the lightest description, but not remarkable for cleanliness; a fact I believe to be as much owing to taste as to poverty. I was informed—though I do not vouch for the accuracy of the information—that thus far their conduct in the war had been barbarous in the extreme, for they had proved alike faithless to their new friends, and ungenerous to their enemies: indeed, the *ranchèros* have frequently declared that they dwelt not less in dread of their Indian allies than of the Americans; the outrages and the violence of the latter being, of the two, perhaps more endurable than the depredations of the former. I have smiled on such occasions, for I passed, of course, for an American, and the equivocal compliment was a little on our side. I cannot help thinking, however, that treachery and double-dealing

are not exclusively characteristic of the Indians, for experience has shown us that until the civilized man came into contact with the red-skins, such vices were only practised amongst them in warfare, when circumvention became a virtue; the pale-face taught the Red Indian how to cheat, by first cheating him, and now he taunts him because he has profited by the lesson.

There is in the neighbourhood of San Antonio a silver mine, which has been long but unprofitably worked, affording neither fair returns for capital expended, nor high wages to those employed. I noticed at the bottom of the streams, and in the fissures of the rocks, numerous minute particles of a metal resembling gold, for which it has often been mistaken; and these deposits frequently came under my observation during our journey.

San Antonio is very solidly built, the walls being of *adobè*, or clay, about two feet in thickness, and the houses roofed with red tiles, no house consisting of more than the ground-floor, which is a mode of construction

very common, indeed, most general, in this and other parts of the country. In the centre of the town is a square of about one hundred and fifty feet in width, to the left of which is a spacious basin of stone, coated with a kind of cement, and which is used as a bath and for washing clothes.

I enjoyed a good night's rest in this town, my couch being an old billiard-table, which had been left behind in the house I was quartered in. Next morning I found that a foraging party had succeeded, in the course of the previous evening, in seizing a number of fresh horses and mules, one of which latter animals, well saddled and bridled, I procured for my own use, after a considerable clamour. I soon had occasion to congratulate myself on my good luck, for when we came presently to the wild and rugged country, instead of lagging in the rear of the party, I managed to keep pace with the foremost.

One morning, we were near committing a mistake, which might have occasioned the loss of several lives, had we not discovered our

error just in time to prevent a volley from being fired into an advancing body of men, whom we believed to be Yakee Indians, but who turned out to be twelve Californian *ranchèros*, well mounted, and armed to the very teeth, with rifles, carbines, and pistols. At the nick of time, one of them held out a white handkerchief, tied to the muzzle of his piece; the result was a parley, when we discovered that they purposed to join our party, being disgusted and dispirited, as well as impoverished, by the losses they had sustained from the Yakees and the Mexican soldiers. At least, this was the tale they told us. They were tall, fine-looking men, of handsome mien and carriage, and we found in them most useful auxiliaries, as their knowledge of the country was superior in every respect to ours, notwithstanding that we had good guides.

A sad mischance happened to me one night, during a halt we made. My good mule, with his well-padded saddle and new bridle, was stolen from me, in spite of the sharp look-out

I fancied I kept. I strongly suspected some Spaniards of our party, whose particular duty it was to attend to the *cavallard*, and to the animals whilst they were grazing. They had the reputation of being very expert at horse-stealing; nor have I the least inclination to detract from it. Their practice was to allow the horses and mules to wander away in search of better pasture, as they alleged; and having got them to a suitable spot, and selected those they wanted—never the worst—they would drive them over some hill into a place known only to themselves, where they or their companions and accomplices could light upon them at the convenient moment.

In this way we lost several excellent cattle, both horses and mules. For my own part, to my great annoyance, I was obliged to content myself with a lanky grey horse, which seemed in the last stage of consumption; his back-bone was sharp as a razor, and I had nothing but a blanket in guise of saddle, and for stirrups two long straps of raw hide. I was assured, however, that my Rosinante

was of first-rate blood, on the strength of which illusion I mounted him, and, consoling myself with it as well as I could, jogged on very uncomfortably, contriving never to quite lose sight of my better mounted companions.

In this manner I accomplished fifty miles, or more, and I ought to speak kindly of the poor beast that carried me, though it was at his own pace. I had not the heart to use switch or spur, when I looked at his spiritless eye, and glanced at his bare ribs, which poked almost through his skin, and showed like so many staves of a barrel. I am sure, if he suffered as much in carrying me as I did in riding him, it was lucky for both that his pace was not what might have been called "fast," for a trot must inevitably have shaken him to pieces, and sawn my unfortunate body in two: it was awful to contemplate what even a moderately quick walk actually did. The pilgrim's purgatory of peas in one's shoes must have been Paradise itself, compared to this slow and excruciating mode of progres-

sion. I am bound, however, to do the poor animal the justice to say, that if he did not go well, it was not his fault, and that he would have done so, had he been able. He did his best, and beast or man can do no more.

As we approached Todos Santos, I stopped to arrange the girth of my blanket, which had become loose, when I observed Doctor Freünd, the German whom I have already mentioned, sitting on a mound of earth by the road-side, holding his huge portmanteau on his knees, and with a countenance expressive of the deepest misery. I saw in a moment what was the matter; but to load my beast with the Doctor's portmanteau, which was crammed to bursting with all sorts of medicines, would have been reducing myself to the same miserable plight. We were, I believed, the only two left in the rear, and there was no alternative but to leave him where he was for a time, as at our next halt it would be easy for one of the best mounted to retrace his steps, and assist the Doctor out of his difficulties. Accordingly, after hinting my intentions,

I resumed my journey, but had not proceeded more than a quarter of a mile before he overtook me, mounted on a well saddled horse, and leading another by the *hackamore*. I had not recovered from my astonishment, when another laggard came galloping up to us, shouting and laughing, as if in an ecstasy of merriment—

"Capital! capital! Ha, ha, ha! What fun! Bravely done, Doctor, and very sensibly."

I became very anxious to learn what the Doctor had done; and our comrade was too full of the subject to delay gratifying my curiosity.

"I stopped behind awhile to rest," resumed he, "with some more of our fellows, who are getting very tired; and, as I was fetching up again, just as I came to the little path that turns off the road a little way back, who should I see but the Doctor, with a six-barrel revolver in each hand, pointed at the heads of two well-mounted but unarmed Spaniards; for they only had knives, which were of no

use against such arguments as the Doctor's. I was quite near enough to hear their conversation.

"'Your horses or your *lifes*,' cried the Doctor.

"'*No entendemos, señor*,' said the Spaniards, both in a breath.

"'You don't, don't you?' cried the Doctor, again; 'perhabs you *saben que ser caballos?*'

"'*Si, señor.*'

"'Do you *saben* bistol *tambien?*' asked the Doctor.

"'*Si, señor*,' said one of them, who shook like a leaf.

"'Vell, den, d—n you,' said the Doctor, '*quieren ustedes soltar sus caballos*, or I break your hets; dat is, I mean, *romper* your d—n *cabesas* wit *estas* bistols. You *saben* dat, eh?'

"'*Si, señor, si*,' answered the Spaniards; and they jumped off their horses in a twinkling; and I can tell you the Doctor lost no time in mounting the nearest of them. Ha, ha, ha! Excellent, wasn't it?"

I laughed heartily enough at the recital of this curious adventure, which the Doctor wound up by saying—

"I haf a fery pig knapsack, fitch is fery heffy, and fitch I must pring wit me. Ven I cot horse, I no care a pig d—n how I ket him."

* * * *

At last, after many days and nights of weary marching, we came to a wide plain, all sand, and stones, and prickly bushes, but the path across which was so narrow as to oblige us to take to the Indian file again; and a pretty long string we made, being not less than two hundred and twenty in number. However, in spite of the intense heat and dust, and of the burning thirst that devoured us, we pushed on in tolerable spirits, for we now began to distinguish the heights on which the town of Todos Santos is situated, and from which we were separated only by the plain we were now crossing. As we drew nearer, we plainly discerned the enemy dotted about on convenient elevations, and a loud

shout burst from all—men, horses, and mules, suddenly, as if by some preconcerted arrangement, dashing on with renewed energy, heedless of every obstacle, and eager only, as it seemed, to have "a brush" with the foe.

CHAPTER VIII.

A brush with the enemy—A narrow escape—O'Reilly's prowess—An awkward fix—A repast on sugar-canes—The last of my blood-horse—Lost and found—La Paz again—Old acquaintances—Black Jack does more murder—Women of La Paz—Departure for San José.

The main body of the enemy, about four hundred in number, lay posted on the summit of a hill, beyond musket-shot, and apparently extremely well mounted and armed. As we drew nearer, they waved their flags by way of defiance, and commenced a dropping fire, which however did us no injury, although it served to animate our courage. Presently we commenced the ascent of the rugged steep on which they were so advantageously posted, when the firing became more sustained, and was returned by us with great spirit and with fatal effect. All at once we were saluted with a discharge of musketry from the borders of

a dense forest of brushwood and cacti, stretching from the foot of the heights along the right side of the plain we had so recently cleared, and in which this ambuscade had been prepared for us; into this part of the forest the party I belonged to was ordered to plunge, and charge the enemy at the point of the bayonet; an order we executed with the rapidity of lightning, succeeding, after some hard fighting, in which a great number of Californians and Yakees were killed, in dislodging these sharpshooters, whom we pursued with great spirit. In this "brush" we lost several men.

Our little party consisted of about fifty volunteers, who at once pushed into the jungle, but vainly sought a trace of the enemy. As we found it impossible to advance in a body, we broke up into fives and sixes; having come to an understanding that we would afford one another mutual support, and direct our steps by the report of the guns. We soon lost sight of each other in our attempts to clear ourselves a passage through the brambles, and thorn, and underwood, suffering severely from

the lacerations they inflicted upon us: indeed, so great was our difficulty, and so embarrassed were we—at least I judge from my own personal experience—that if the enemy had only taken advantage of this natural defence, their ambuscade would have proved fatal to us, for we might easily have been cut off in detail to a single man. But the enemy did not make his appearance; and I was even expressing my astonishment at this circumstance, in a kind of soliloquy, mixing it up with conjectures as to whether I should ever succeed in getting out of this abominable labyrinth of cross-branches, when I heard myself called by name, and soon recognised the voice of O'Reilly, though I could not make out whence it proceeded. "Look out, look out!" shouted he; "the bloodthirsty divil has you under cover."

I was so bewildered by the suddenness of this intimation, that it is a matter of astonishment to me how I escaped the bullet, that—ere the words were well out of O'Reilly's mouth—whistled a most unpleasant tune close to my ear. I remember standing still for a single

moment, at which time I must have offered a very fair mark to the gentleman, the shining muzzle of whose well polished rifle I saw the next instant, still smoking, and pointed at me through a small opening in the thickest of the brushwood. In consequence of the closeness of the bushes, I was unable to bring my musket round to return the compliment, though it would have proved a random shot, for I could not see the individual who had so nearly brought my volunteering to a close; I felt relieved when I heard O'Reilly's voice again.

"Hush, hush!" cried he, (my Irish friend was still invisible) "it's a Yakee! The cowardly thief's skulking behind a three! Come out and be shot like a man, you ugly-looking naygur."

Here he stopped short, and presently came plunging to my side with a crash through the bushes in which he had been concealed, armed with a rifle, which I afterwards ascertained he had picked up; it had probably belonged to one of the Californians who had fallen under our fire, and he now kept it close up to his

shoulder, and ready to lower it at the first stir in the brushwood. Making a sign to me with his left hand to keep back, and then stealing forward through a small opening between two bushes, he crept on, my eyes mechanically following his movements. I now caught sight —a mere glimpse—of something which I at first took to be part of the trunk of a tree, but which I soon perceived to be a Yakee, who stood partially concealed by it.

"Hush!" again muttered O'Reilly, lowering his rifle; "I've got him now; just look what a jig he'll dance."

There was a pause of a few moments—of a minute perhaps—during which we heard the voices of our comrades, varied now and then by the report of a musket; they were not far off, although completely hidden from our view. I actually trembled with excitement, and though the heat was intense, a cold, clammy sweat stood on my brow, and oozed out at the tips of my fingers. O'Reilly's rifle still covered the tree, but the Yakee did not move; all at once the report of another musket, very

close to him I fancy, induced him to step cautiously out, his intention being, no doubt, to conceal himself more effectually; I saw him look inquisitively round, without exhibiting any symptom of fear, then came the sharp report of my companion's rifle, and the Indian rolled over, a lifeless corpse.

"Hurrah!" shouted O'Reilly in triumph, "I knew I'd make a clane job of him. Come on, my beauties, if there are any more of ye."

Telling my companion to moderate his excitement, I proceeded with him to the spot where the Yakee lay. A fine fellow he was—young, handsome, and powerfully built. O'Reilly's ball had struck him under the left arm, and had, no doubt, pierced the heart. To my great annoyance, my companion commenced very coolly appropriating to himself the contents of a small purse of skin, which the Indian wore slung from his belt, as also his cartridges; the rifle he handed to me, and I took it, leaving my musket on the spot.

"Sure, all this money's no good to him now," replied he to a remonstrance I ventured

to make; "the fellow could never have got it honestly, and, if *we* didn't do it, somebody else wouldn't be long about it."

This was correct enough as a prediction, and I afterwards discovered the utter uselessness of remonstrance against the practice of regarding the money that might be found on a fallen foe as so much lawful booty. In this instance, it only amounted to a few dollars. I said no more, and proceeded to assist O'Reilly to reload his rifle, the one I had being ready charged: it had been the last act of the Yakee.

We again soon became entangled in the bushes, and separated from each other, both intent upon making the best of our way to our companions, whom we no longer heard in our vicinity. It was not long, however, before I heard three sharp reports, followed up by the shouts of O'Reilly, whose whereabouts I at last succeeded in discovering. He was engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with two Yakee Indians, the three having discharged their pieces without effect previously to en-

gaging in this close and desperate conflict. I ought to observe, that, although O'Reilly had abandoned his musket, he had first removed the bayonet, and adjusted it to his rifle; an example I had likewise followed. He was thrusting desperately at the two Indians, who, on their side, parried every thrust with the greatest dexterity, using the butt-end of their pieces for this purpose. I levelled my rifle, intending to assist him; but the curious manner in which the combatants dodged about rendered it a matter of uncertainty whether I might not shoot my comrade instead of either of his opponents.

My momentary hesitation was not of much consequence, as it turned out; for, finding he could not get at them, he sprang aside, and, dexterously twisting his rifle round so as to grasp the muzzle, he began whirling it about until he got the chance of bringing the butt-end of it down upon the head of the nearest Indian, who fell instantly; seeing which, the other leaped into the bush and disappeared. I fired at him as he fled, but, I believe, with-

out effect. His companion was only stunned, and we had no difficulty in securing him.

This little affair was scarcely over before my services were claimed in the most piteous accents, and, looking about me, I discovered one of our party so painfully entangled in the adjacent bushes, that to advance or to retreat without assistance was alike impossible. He had endeavoured, whilst in hot pursuit of the two Yakees in question, to clear at a leap some bushes, the width of which he had not calculated, and being encumbered with his heavy accoutrements, arms, and ammunition, had, in the attempt, fallen short, and plunged into a hollow covered by the brushwood; amongst which he got fast stuck, his body being inextricably bound by coils of brambles and thorny bushes, which had lacerated him in the most cruel manner. I soon released him; and we set off again, shouting, at the top of our voices, to attract the attention of our comrades.

In the course of another hour, during which we had several smart chases, and wounded a

number of Yakees and Spaniards, as they made off, we came up with several of our party, and finally emerged from this forest of jungle, all of us most deplorably cut and mangled by the thorns, our clothes torn to rags, the blood and the perspiration streaming from our hands, faces, and legs, and our persons completely encased in a covering of dirt and sand. We had left our horses and mules at the entrance of the forest, so we had now to walk a considerable distance in search of them. Thanks to the activity and watchfulness of our guides, we soon recovered them; and, having clambered the heights to which I have already alluded, advanced towards the town. Every Californian had fled except two, and they wisely lost no time in following the example of their brethren. The hindmost man we recognised as one of our late guides, and the other fugitive a large, bulky Yakee. The latter made for the crags at the very top of his speed, and escaped the three first shots that were fired at him—the fourth struck him: he leaped up, then dropped, writhed,

and rolled over the rock into the precipitous valley beneath.

We took up our quarters in the church and the adjoining mission buildings, our standard-bearer clambering to the top of the former, where he left our colours flying. At the corner of the street in which the church stands, we saw a Yakee Indian sitting on a stone, and suffering intense anguish from the effect of a musket-ball, which had shattered the bone of his right leg in the most shocking manner. We proffered every assistance our medical and surgical resources would allow of, but he stedfastly refused all our offers, and we consequently abandoned him as lost; but some time after I learned, that, under the care of the natives, he had perfectly recovered.

Our men were completely exhausted from the fatigue of the march, the recent fight, and the want of food; and, as soon as we were housed, we began to think of refreshment. To our consternation, there were but a few pieces of dried beef left; and, what was worse, nothing could be procured, for the

huts had been abandoned and cleared of every thing in the shape of victuals, and our foraging parties returned empty-handed. In this dilemma we sallied forth in a body, determined to procure wherewith to satisfy Nature's cravings; and, descending from the town, entered one of the loveliest valleys I have ever seen in Lower California, almost encircled by a clear and rapid stream, about eight feet wide, but shallow. Hungry as we were, the luxury of a bath in our present condition was irresistible, and we plunged into the water like so many spaniels. Our bathe over, we were further rejoiced by the discovery of an extensive sugar plantation, where the rich canes, just arrived at maturity, stood temptingly inviting. Never did a herd of famished wolves pounce more ravenously upon a flock than did we upon these delicious canes. Our knives and jaws were soon in full activity, and we kept the latter hard at work for the space of three mortal hours, without, however, satisfying our stomachs. At length we were fairly beaten; we could chew no longer,

our jaws ached so; nevertheless, we each cut a bundle of canes, and marched across the plantation into another part of the valley, where — equally to our satisfaction — we discovered a field of Indian corn not more than half ripe, but upon which we fell, notwithstanding, making up each man his load, with which we returned to our quarters. We did not fail to renew our visits to both plantations, in which we made surprising havoc in the course of a few days.

I may observe, of the church and of the mission buildings, that they are the largest and most imposing structures of the kind in Lower California. The former has a handsome front and a very lofty steeple, and a gateway, common to the church and the mission-house, opens at once into the interior; the latter has a piazza, to which the pillars, forming arches at the top, impart a rather novel effect; it doubtless formed the favourite promenade of the old Jesuits, who were protected by it from the sun and the rain. When I looked around upon the desolate

region in the midst of which such a noble structure had been erected for the advancement of education and religion, I could not refrain from paying my humble tribute of admiration to the enterprising spirit which had conceived and carried out so grand an idea.

The church was ransacked in search of valuables, but every article of price had already disappeared, save sundry robes in which the priests were accustomed to officiate at the altar, and the gold and silver lace on which were stripped off, and converted into ornaments for the head-stalls of the men's horses and mules.

In the mission-house we had a somewhat remarkable prisoner in the person of Father Gabriel, the head of the church in California, and one of those intriguing, restless, and turbulent spirits who had most contributed to excite the people to take arms. He was a short, thick-set, and unwieldy specimen of clerical self-denial, with a head as bald and shining as a newly-polished orange, to the complexion

of which that of his face closely approximated. The expression of his countenance was decidedly sensual; but there was a keenness in his brilliant eye that denoted the shrewd, worldly mind, and the clever political concocter of schemes. He was reputed wealthy, and possessed a large *ranché* at a short distance from Todos Santos, where he employed a great many Indians in the manufacturing of soap, *penocha*, and other articles which he traded in, realizing on them an enormous profit. He probably feared that the arrival of the Americans in Lower California, of which he had been long the virtual monarch, would materially diminish his influence and his gains; hence his bitter animosity, and the pertinacity with which he devoted his talents, his influence, and his wealth, to organizing a spirited resistance against them. I may add, that scandal reported him to be the father of twenty-two children.

We had not been long in the town before we were invaded by a number of Yakees, who came to surrender themselves as prisoners,

their confidence in us being awakened by the kindness we exhibited to a few of their brethren whom we had captured. Their arrival greatly embarrassed us, as we were so short of provisions; indeed, the straits we were reduced to rendered it necessary to send back a party of our men to La Paz, in order to procure a fresh supply; whilst a second party received orders to scour the neighbouring country on the same errand, and likewise to see that the enemy were not lurking about. This latter point being set at rest, and the object of our expedition to Todos Santos accomplished, our commander probably thought we had better not await the return of the men who had been sent back to La Paz; for, at the end of a week, we received instructions to resume our journey to this latter town; and, as we were somewhat rested, we set off in better spirits than might have been anticipated, taking a different path — I cannot call it a road — from the one we had followed in coming.

One evening we came upon a Yakee en-

campment, in a deep hollow on our left, which was betrayed to us by the light of the fires. As we were concealed from the Indians by a thick skirting of brushwood, we crept cautiously forward, with a view to take them by surprise, when one of our men, perceiving a figure moving in the obscurity, fired his musket at it without orders; on which the Yakees all leaped up, with a loud yell, and disappeared instantly in the bushes. Almost immediately after, one of our guides presented himself in the midst of us, bleeding from a severe flesh-wound in the arm, he having been the victim of our comrade's rashness. This was another specimen of the irregularities of the volunteer system.

My poor "blood-horse" was now so completely worn out, that, finding him worse than useless — for he had become a burden — I made up my mind to abandon him, which I accordingly did, not far from a patch of pasture, and from a tolerably well-beaten track. I was myself scarcely less fatigued, and lagged behind several times to snatch a little rest.

Many of our party did the same; indeed, I remarked, that the stoutest and biggest gave in first; whilst the little fellows—I am small myself—battled it out bravely, and got along with much less seeming difficulty. On one of these occasions, I tarried behind a full hour after the last of our laggards had passed me; but, finding dusk fast setting in, I recommenced my journey, and went on until I lost the path. At first, I stood aghast, looking behind and before, to the left, to the right—and, in short, in every direction, but in vain. I went a little way back, and tried to make out the track; then, not succeeding, pushed on ahead, but with no better fortune. I turned round and struck off at random, continuing my course until I came to a dead stop at an ugly shelf of rock overlooking a deep chasm between the crags. I will not attempt to describe my feelings. I remember thinking of my mother and friends, and of a picture I had somewhere seen of the finding of a lost traveller's skeleton. I think I then said the "Lord's Prayer," and afterwards sat down and

wept, until I actually dozed, though my mind was, all the time, wandering upon my unfortunate position. All at once I sprang to my feet, growing desperate, I suppose, and set off running as fast as I could, and, as nearly as I could guess, in the direction from which I had come; until, I imagine, I must have traversed some five miles of ground. I then began to abuse myself for my folly in not endeavouring to seek signs of the passage of living things, as the Indians do when they lose the trail, and forthwith commenced my search, every sense acquiring extraordinary keenness. Still I found no symptom of a track, and in despair cast myself on my face upon the sand, giving myself up for lost. Suddenly, as I lay there, I heard a thumping noise on the ground, which I instantly recognised to be the tramp of hoofs; and listening now with increased vigilance, soon ascertained the direction of the sound, and scampered off towards it.

Unbounded was my joy, on reaching a turn in the course I was following, to come

upon an Indian hut, in front of which were two natives with their mules saddled and bridled, they having, apparently, just arrived. There was yet sufficient light to enable me to distinguish them to be Californians, not Yakees; but I did not feel so sure of them as to be at my ease, however great the relief I experienced at being rescued from the lingering death I had anticipated. Nevertheless, I went up and strove to make them comprehend that I had lost my way, and was entirely at their mercy: their only reply was, "No, no!" After a long and fruitless attempt to brighten up their understandings by a complicated series of telegraphic signs, and perceiving that they were about to remount, I intimated my wish to get up behind one of them — selecting the lesser man of the two, out of pity to his beast—and adding, "*Soldado Americano.*" They both replied by reiterating the last syllable of the second word, "No, no!" though, as I subsequently understood, they meant that they were neither of them American soldiers.

Now, as I did not relish being left behind, and had not yet lost all hope, I made no ceremony, but nimbly leaped upon the mule I had selected, just as its rider had taken his seat, whom I firmly grasped, and who, to my surprise, and no small satisfaction, gave his animal the spur without taking the least notice of me. In fact, I thought he seemed rather amused, if anything. I could not help wondering, however, where this adventure would terminate, for, although I retained my rifle, they were not unarmed, and I felt myself wholly in their power, and even fancied how easily they might carry me off a prisoner. The first intimation I procured of their possibly being friends, was by my hand coming into contact with an India rubber knapsack, which my companion carried before him, and which he had hinted to me his desire that I should grasp, probably because, as I sat, I somewhat inconvenienced his movements. I knew, by the peculiar make of this knapsack, that it belonged to our volunteer corps, and began to conjecture whether these

two men might not form a part of our body of Californian guides; on the other hand, it might be spoil taken from one of the comrades we had lost: however, my doubts were in due time set at rest by our coming up to a *ranché*, about which my companions were congregated, and feasting right merrily. They were heartily rejoiced to see me, and I returned the compliment with great sincerity. I related my mishap, which was interpreted to my two friends, who then informed me that they had stayed behind to rest and refresh, and that I must have been going round and round the very place where they first saw me, from the moment I missed the path, until I so luckily fell into it again. Had I pushed boldly onwards, when I fancied I had lost myself, I should not have incurred so much anxiety, but have come up at last with the main body of the volunteers.

After taking some refreshment, we renewed our march; the country through which we passed being, if anything, even wilder than our former route. No circumstance,

however, deserving of record occurred, except our meeting with the return party from La Paz (which had been sent for a supply of provisions) shortly after our falling into the old road again. It was a most fortunate meeting; had we missed each other, there would have been much time lost, and much fatigue and anxiety uselessly incurred, as the party would have gone forward to Todos Santos, and have then had to return to La Paz. As it fell out —more thanks to our luck and theirs than to the good management of our leader—we got back together. When we entered the town, we looked like a band of barbarians, so unshaven and travel-soiled were we, but a few days' repose recruited us wonderfully, albeit our quarters were none of the best.

We had been back about ten days, when we heard of the return of Black Jack, and a party of fifty men, who had been sent out on an expedition to the head of the gulf; and the same person who brought this news likewise informed us that two Indians, whom they

had captured some fifty miles off and conducted hither, had just been shot by command of this officer. Several of us went to the spot where the tragedy had been enacted, and there saw the two dead bodies, and several of our men digging graves in the sand. I felt deep disgust, when I came to learn the particulars of this murder, which seemed to have been perpetrated without any pretext, even regarding it in the light of an execution. It appeared that they had surrendered themselves prisoners, and the men had spared their lives, notwithstanding Black Jack's orders that every Indian they took should be shot on the spot. He justified the act, by asserting that they had committed violence on some women at one of the *ranchés*, where the party had halted some days before; but this was the first the men had heard of it, and the whole story was besides so improbable, seeing that the men had never been lost sight of, that it could be attributed to nothing save a reckless spirit of blood-shedding. I afterwards ascertained that one of the victims was a Yakee;

the other a native of La Paz, who had joined this Indian tribe. His mother and his sister were both kneeling over his corpse, and giving way to their grief in the most frantic manner. The general impression was, that presuming their guilt, they ought to have been at least tried, especially as they had reached head-quarters; and I remember that the feeling became very strong against Black Jack on account of this sad event, which we looked upon as calculated to get us a name for cruelty we really did not deserve.

I found our old friend Wettermark snugly installed in a hut which he had constructed very neatly of bamboo, and covered with dry leaves, quite in the Indian style. He had taken this trouble because he neither liked his quarters nor his companions, who were always plaguing him, and because he wanted to place beyond the reach of its tormentors a cub-fox he had caught in one of his iron traps, and which he had tamed. But the oddest circumstance connected with this affair was, that he had succeeded, by importuning the colonel,

in getting the fox its regular rations, just as if it had been one of the corps; a fact which afforded considerable merriment to the wags of the various companies.

Our time at La Paz did not hang heavily upon our hands, for we soon made acquaintance with the townspeople, who received us very hospitably, and entertained us well. Nor can I take leave of this place without bearing testimony to the beauty of its women, those of Castilian descent being perhaps the handsomest; although the next caste, namely, that but slightly tinctured with Indian blood, might fairly lay an equal claim to the palm. The pure Indians are coarse and swarthy, as, indeed, are all the Mexicans, but perfect models of form, and of most winning gentleness and kindness. The usual dress of the women consists of a white muslin or calico gown, extremely loose to the figure, with a *rebosa* or scarf of the same, which they cast over their heads, and let fall in graceful folds about their persons. Their feet are protected by a tiny slipper, frequently of the most deli-

cate texture, which barely covers the toes, the instep being left exposed. The majority dispense with stockings, but, as their dress reaches to the ancle, these are superfluous. I have seen some, too, who allowed the body of their gown to fall about their waist, substituting for it, so as partially to conceal their bust and their arms, a *camisas* of the simplest form. The heat of the climate renders a loose style of dress absolutely necessary for ordinary comfort's sake. I may add, that the women perform the most laborious household work, such as cutting up, salting, and drying, beef, grinding corn for *tortillas*, chopping wood, fetching water from the wells, frequently up the steepest elevations, and so forth. But they appear to do all this very cheerfully, whilst their lords are taking their pleasure at a race, a bull-fight, or at the gambling-table.

We remained a fortnight in La Paz, after the return from Todos Santos, and then received an intimation that we were to proceed to San José, which town had been fixed upon

as our head-quarters. Accordingly, we were embarked on board the store-ship Southampton, then lying in the harbour, and, after a few days' sail, were safely landed on the beach of this last-mentioned town.

CHAPTER IX.

San José—The Valley of San José—Drills, sickness, convalescence, and sentiment—The inhabitants of San José—Mutiny—Black Jack again—Native funereal ceremonies—Black Jack's disgrace—First news of the gold mines—Embarkation for Monterey—Premonitory symptoms of the gold fever.

Our landing was effected with no further discomfort than was to be expected from our having to incur the chances of a ducking; as the boats were unable, on account of the shallowness of the water and the strong tide, to approach within a comfortable distance of *terra firma.* This, however, reckoned for nothing: nor did our tedious march to the town, though it was only three miles from the beach; nor our being several times nearly buried alive in the heaps of sand that filled the hollows of the road; nor our having to wade through a stream of some twenty feet

wide that crossed it at the most inconvenient part, to say nothing of the broiling heat; altogether, and notwithstanding that we thought but little of it at the time, it was the most uncomfortable and tedious march—for such a short one—I ever remember to have encountered.

The principal, indeed the only regular street in the town, is wide and long, the houses being constructed of *adobè* and cane, thatched with palm leaves. It is blocked up at the remoter end by the fort, which stands upon a wide foundation of rock of considerable elevation; various portions of the *adobè* walls connecting the crags having been pierced, so as to allow artillery to be trained through the embrasures, whilst, in other parts, there are numerous loopholes for musketry. There are some very awkward cavities amongst these rocks, produced, as I subsequently ascertained, by digging for clay for the *adobè* work. The fort is flat-roofed and parapetted, having portholes for cannon; and below, in the very centre of the building, occupying about a third of its

entire length, runs a thick wall, forming a crescent, well-mounted with heavy guns. At the end of this crescent, between it and the front wall, is the entrance to the fort—a mere aperture, barely wide enough to allow of one man's passing in. These defences, imperfect as they were, had proved of immense advantage to the Americans during the recent siege, who had kept up, from behind them, a very destructive fire upon the enemy.

In the *correl* I found, huddled up in one corner, about thirty Yakees and Indians of Lower California, many of them doubly-ironed, and most of them half naked, whilst all were dirty, and fierce even in bondage. Some marines were mounted as a guard over them, and were engaged in animated conversation with several coarse-looking women, their paramours; the latter had sought the protection of the Americans, and distinguished themselves in the recent conflicts, having endured, in common with the men, the most severe privations. The majority were weeping and sobbing; being on the point of separation from the objects of

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their passing attachment, who were about to be transferred to the Southampton along with their prisoners — to be conveyed to Mazatlan—as soon as the vessel had discharged the stores she had brought for the use of the garrison.

The town of San José is one of the most extraordinary creations, in the shape of a dwelling-place, that I have ever seen. The heavy rains and freshets which occur in the wet season, in this region, render every elevation invaluable as a preservative against the dangers of sudden inundations; hence all the houses are built upon steeps, rocks, and hillocks, necessarily irrespective of order; so that, even in the most densely populated districts, barren hills, as yet unoccupied by dwellings, are frequently to be met with, with deep hollows in every part, converting mere visits into positive enterprises, in most instances both tedious and disagreeable. To these great natural disadvantages, the indolence of the inhabitants has added others, their common practice being to dig for *adobè* clay at the

nearest convenient spot, namely, for the most part, opposite their own doors; thus, one would imagine that the site of the whole town had been visited and disturbed by a succession of miniature earthquakes, which, whilst they had left the houses themselves unshaken, had heaved and perched them up in the most uncomfortable positions, and in the most inaccessible places. In the very centre of the principal street, which appears to have once upon a time been level, are three or four immense clay-pits, serving as a receptacle for dead dogs, cats, bones, vegetable refuse, and, in a word, every description of rubbish and nuisance a very dirty population can convey to or discharge into them.

But my description of the town would be incomplete without adding that it is dotted about in these hollows, and in the sand-holes in the rocks, with patches of thorn, brush, and cacti, forming a singular yet refreshing contrast with the general barrenness of the region itself, the whole being surrounded by a bleak mountainous range, which increases in eleva-

tion until it blends with the clear sky, far in the distance.

I ought, however, not to omit stating that this desert region is redeemed from its ungenial character by the beautiful valley of San José, which stretches right across the peninsula, from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of California, a distance of not less than from a hundred and fifty to nearly two hundred miles.

It is with a feeling approximating to wonderment that the spectator looks down upon the opening of this valley from a precipitous hill close to the fort; so unprepared is he, by the general aspect of nature here, to behold a sandy plain thickly studded with luxuriant orchards and plantations, surrounded and enclosed by tropical plants of great height and beauty, with narrow paths intersecting the bushes and brushwood, and here and there a solitary *ranché* perched aloft on some commanding crag, until the whole landscape, losing itself in the distant mountains, fades into those soft and dreamy tints peculiar to torrid latitudes.

A few days after our arrival, the remains of M'Clanahan were exhumed, and deposited in a rude coffin, previously to their being conveyed to the spot selected for their last resting-place. The body had been at first interred in a temporary grave dug in one corner of the *correl* I have mentioned. It was now carried to the summit of a mound of earth, overlooking the sea, and there buried with all the honours of war. The crew of the Ciane, equipped in a semi-military costume, joined the volunteers, and formed a grand funeral procession, whilst the officers of the vessel paid a last tribute to the memory of their deceased companion-in-arms, by the erection of a rail-fence round the spot.

Our duties in this place were extremely severe; we had drills in the morning, drills in the afternoon, and very frequently artillery exercise; for, as the natives gave open intimation of their hatred of the Americans, apprehensions were entertained of a rising, and it was thought prudent to be prepared for the worst. The fatigue proved too much for me;

and being constantly exposed to the broiling sun, I fell sick of the *calentura*, and lay for some time in my miserable quarters, completely prostrated, both physically and mentally.

On my recovery, I usually sought the society of the natives, who ever received and treated me with the greatest kindness, and to whom I soon recommended myself by my poor talent for sketching portraits. I found the women to possess an extremely pleasing exterior; their complexion was a little dark, perhaps, but this imparted additional piquancy to their countenances. Their costume being of the simplest possible character, afforded me many opportunities of admiring their fair proportions. They are indeed singularly well-shaped, though somewhat remarkable for *embonpoint*. Their feet, legs, and arms, are usually bare; but they wear their dresses long, and loosely wrapped about their persons: so that this custom is not only devoid of indecorum, but rather becoming than otherwise.

With one of these Californian maidens I

almost fell desperately in love; indeed, considering how shattered my nervous system had become from illness, and how romantically kind Cacusa showed herself in her simple attentions, my wonderment is that I did not become inextricably involved in a downright sentimental dilemma. She was very beautiful, and that is the plain, honest truth; so beautiful, I should fear to describe her, lest my portraiture might be thought to be merely drawn from imagination. I will, therefore, dismiss the subject, merely observing that I was somewhat surprised at finding that the Christian name of my rustic beauty was synonymous with "Jesus;" it being the custom of the country to christen persons by all sorts of Scriptural names, without reference to their appropriateness to sex or to circumstance; and that, although I did *not* fall in love with Cacusa—at least not too deeply—her image will at times steal across my memory.

The population of San José may average three thousand persons, the majority being semi-Indians, or the pure descendants of the

Mexicans. Our volunteers were well received amongst them, and experienced numerous acts of kindness at their hands. They are greatly addicted to gambling, their favourite game being *monté*, which is in universal esteem throughout the Californias. They are also a musical people; and although I always considered their mirthful songs to savour more of the dirge than of the ditty, I observed that they kept good time, and accompanied themselves well on the guitar.

I may add that the ladies of San José, as of the whole of Lower California, are extravagantly fond of smoking; their *cigaritos* being composed of tobacco, rolled up to a convenient size in the leaf of the Indian maize; some did ample justice to a few choice Havannahs I presented to them, though I could never reconcile myself altogether to the habit as being one suited to the sex. But tastes differ.

The usual beverages, besides water, are wine, *mascal*, and *aguardiente*. The two latter are manufactured in large quantities in the valley

of San José; the last named tastes something like Irish whiskey, but the other is fiery and unpalatable, and unlike any liquor I have ever drunk. The wine is good, the vines being of the finest kind, and the vineyards numerous and highly productive.

The fertile parts of the country produce wheat, maize, beans, pease, sweet potatoes and Irish, sugar-cane, vegetables of all sorts in profusion, and abundance of fruits, including oranges, limes, lemons, plantain, and other kinds of tropical fruits, all of which are cultivated in their utmost luxuriance. But the *petia*, which is taken from a species of the cactus, appears to be the general favourite in California, and the inhabitants have a method of converting it into a kind of jam, or preserve, which, being put up in the leaves of the Indian corn, in quantities of from a quarter to half a pound, is retailed at the price of a *real*, or sixpence each packet. These packages are very neat, one leaf over-lapping the other about the fruit, and both twisted tightly together at the ends.

I have already observed that the valley of San José, taken as a whole, seems extremely fertile; and I may add, that the land in California, susceptible of cultivation, yields, in proportion to the quantity under culture, the largest crops in the world. If artificial means of irrigation were introduced, the happiest effects would result, for bread-stuffs could then be produced in abundance, and thus would be removed the great drawback at present existing to a large and rapid increase of the population of Lower California.

Abundance of rain falls here during the winter season, which, I think, might easily be husbanded in convenient reservoirs, so as to furnish an easy supply when wanted, and be made to fertilize extensive tracks of the valley, which are now lying neglected and waste, from no other cause than the want of the means of proper irrigation. I was informed that every three or four years, the entire country is swept by terrific tornadoes, accompanied with torrents of water. These rains prove highly acceptable to the natives, who

often suffer severely from drought. We had several such deluges during our stay, the rain falling in spouts, and rolling in rivulets down the hills, filling every hollow, and converting a large portion of the immense and beautiful valley into a dangerous lagoon. I can with truth say, that I have never seen such rains, nor am I at all desirous of again witnessing them.

The severity of the discipline here became so excessive, that irregularities soon broke out, which shortly afterwards ripened into absolute insubordination. The culprits were committed to the black-hole, many of them for offences extremely trivial; and with the thermometer at 80 and 90 in the month of May, their sufferings became severe to an excess. I ought to state that their place of confinement was simply one half of the guard-room, which had been separated from the other by a strong party-wall of *adobè*, built up to the ceiling, and having but the very smallest aperture for the admission of light and air, and this in quantities barely sufficient for the preservation

of life. At Monterey, two men had been suffocated, I understood, from their being confined in a similar hole; two of ours fainted soon, and were brought-to only by exposure to a purer atmosphere. To all remonstrances, however, "Black Jack" turned a deaf ear; and, as it soon appeared, they only rendered matters worse, for he sent a message to the commander of the Ciane sloop-of-war (which was then lying off Mazatlan), to the effect that the garrison of San José was in a state of mutiny; and on the 14th of May she appeared in the roadstead. Immediately upon her arrival, four of the men were sent on board, doubly ironed, to be conveyed to Mazatlan, and thence to Monterey, for trial before a court-martial.

The death of one of the natives, soon after our arrival here, afforded me an opportunity of witnessing the singular ceremonies observed on such occasions. The body, being enshrouded in white muslin, is bedecked with flowers, and laid out upon a table. The friends and relatives are next invited, and a feast

takes place, which is always followed by a general fandango around the corpse. When a priest can be procured, he usually presides at these funereal festivities; but more frequently than otherwise his services are dispensed with altogether, for, when all is over, the body is conveyed to the burying-place, and lowered into the grave without any form of prayer whatsoever. Coffins are very rarely used by the poorer classes, wood of every description being scarce, and planks and boards of almost incredible value.

I have already twice alluded to "Black Jack," in connexion with several deeds of blood, for the commission of which no one had ever ventured to assert that he had any authority. One day, during our stay here, there came an express, which was read to the volunteers on parade, and which proved to be a command from Governor Mason, that "Black Jack" should be forthwith arrested on the charge of having unlawfully shot two Californians and two Yakee Indian chiefs, and that he should be confined until he could take his

trial at head-quarters. The Governor further ordered that this expression of his opinion on the matter should be published in all the Mexican and United States' newspapers, with a view to remove from the American government any stigma that might attach to it, in consequence of these atrocious deeds. The express was received with acclamation, and the redoubtable "Black Jack" at once consigned to durance vile.

Whilst we were here awaiting the arrival of the despatch which was to release us from service, news reached us of several extensive and prolific gold mines having been discovered in Upper California, and of large fortunes having been realized in an incredibly brief space of time, by the lucky few who chanced to be on the spot, or in the more immediate neighbourhood. At first, the report was treated very lightly, the majority of our men laughing at the idea of gold being found in abundance on the ground; and the whole affair being considered as a hoax got up to induce an emigration into those parts, we

heard little or nothing more about it for awhile.

At last information was received of the signing of the treaty of peace, and we expected to be at once dismissed. Unfortunately a serious difficulty presented itself to prevent our departure, and we were compelled to remain three months longer, until negociations had been entered into for the satisfactory adjustment of the question at issue. It appears that the Americans had agreed to renounce all pretensions to Lower California, whilst the colonel commanding the troops there had given the people to understand that the United States would never resign the country; hence, he found himself seriously compromised with the natives, many of whom had joined the Americans, believing that under their flag they would enjoy a greater degree of liberty, and more certain protection of life and property. On this supposition, and presuming that the United States' Government would certainly not relinquish the country it had conquered, they had abandoned

their own countrymen, and become objects of the bitterest hatred to the large majority of Californians and Yakees, who threatened them with indiscriminate and wholesale slaughter, as soon as their allies, the Americans, should have withdrawn, and their vessels of war left the port. Under these circumstances, the government finally concluded to transport the friendly Californians to the upper country, and to indemnify them for the losses they had sustained at our hands, or at those of the enemy, in consequence of their having sided with us. This point being satisfactorily settled, immediate preparations were made for transferring the garrison, and those who were to accompany it, on board the ships of war lying in the harbour, namely, the Warren, the Southampton, and the Ohio; the troops from La Paz being embarked on board the latter, and the remainder, with the women and children, in the Warren. Finally, the American flag was hauled down from the fort, and the Mexicán run up in its place; a salute was fired, and San José was no longer American.

Our destination was Monterey; and we had not been long on board the Ohio, before we again heard of the gold mines, and of the gold fever. Three Germans, who had embarked with us at San José, were determined to seek their fortunes in the favoured country, and had amply provided themselves with every requisite. The sailors related the most extraordinary accounts which had been received from "the diggings," and ere long the entire conversation turned, aud continued to turn, upon the same topic, every one being infected more or less with the mania for gold-hunting, and more or less resolved to gratify it, as soon as the opportunity for doing so should present itself.

CHAPTER X.

Monterey after the gold-fever—Gold a stronger allurement than glory—The Governor decamps—Difficulty upon difficulty—Disgraceful disbanding of the volunteer corps—Pardon, and escape of "Black Jack"—Organization of gold-hunting parties—Mining regulations—A murder—My own resolution—I get up a party—Bargains for horses—Spanish trickery—A fresh dilemma—Final preparations—The start for the mines.

We reached Monterey again towards the end of August, and landed full of hope, feeling satisfied we should be immediately disbanded, paid, and once more our own masters; free to seek fortune at the "diggings," or elsewhere if we fancied it. But a sore disappointment awaited us. Governor Mason had decamped to the mines; the streets were unpeopled; the houses empty, and the town deserted: with the exception of a stray "regular" now and then, not a living soul

was to be met with. Everybody was off to the real Tom Tiddler's ground, to pick up the gold and silver. From one of these straggling regulars we heard that the soldiers had long ago abandoned the fort on the hill, all attempts to prevent them from deserting their post proving utterly futile against the influence of the thirst for gold, which every fresh account from the mines aggravated. Pursuit was useless; it had been tried and failed, for the pursuers in turn became the pursued, until Governor Mason himself, learning from experience that gold possessed stronger allurements to the soldiers than glory, followed the general example, taking with him a small government cart and a negro servant. He was reported to be away on government business; but no doubt was entertained of the real purpose of his journey to the mines, namely, to speculate in gold, which at this time could be bought there for a fourth of its real value in coined money.

Colonel B—— now assumed the command of the post in the absence of the Governor;

and, upon application being made to him for quarters, we were informed there were none provided, and we must shift in tents as well as we could. The misery of such accommodations soon became intolerable, for, having come from a very warm latitude but recently, the cold and the torrents of rain together threatened to convert every tent into an hospital. In this strait, we resolved to procure better lodgings at any risk, and proceeded at once to break open and instal ourselves in such houses as we judged most suited to our wants. I took possession of the schoolhouse — the door of which I ought, in self-justification, to add, stood invitingly open — and found the private apartments of the schoolmaster exceedingly comfortable. The rest of the house was rapidly appropriated by other parties, and became crowded to excess. Some of the volunteers, nevertheless, preferred remaining in their tents, for reasons which we were not long in discovering. They were on the look-out for horses, which they were of opinion could be better looked after

a little way out of the town, and were not so likely to be stolen from them.

We all felt anxious to be moving towards the valley of gold as soon as possible, but not a word had we yet heard respecting what was just then of very considerable importance to us, namely, the pay which the Government owed us for several months' service, and an honourable and formal discharge—lacking which latter document, we should want our title to the one hundred and sixty acres of land that had been promised to the volunteers as an additional incentive — over and above their pay — to remain faithful to their country's flag. Indeed, so many were the difficulties experienced by us at last in procuring this important instrument, and so desirous were we to depart, that, with two exceptions, the whole body of us were obliged to take the Colonel's verbal dismissal; a circumstance that ultimately involved the majority in an extreme difficulty, when they sought to prove their right to the land in question.

As we found that no intimation was given

us of the period when we might expect to be dismissed, and the time was rapidly passing away, we applied to the Colonel, who replied that he had no power, in the absence of the Governor, to formally discharge the volunteers, and they must, therefore, wait. But the men were growing too impatient to accept this answer as final, and appealed to the Commodore. He, however, refused to interfere, on the plea of this matter being a military question, but expressed an opinion that the Colonel possessed sufficient authority as commander of the post. Further delays ensued, additional remonstrances, more procrastination, stronger representations—but we persisted in our demand until the Colonel finally yielded; probably in consequence of orders received, in the interim, from Governor Mason. A day was accordingly appointed for us to be paid off, when, it being discovered that four or five of the tents had been secreted or carried off, we were informed that we should not be discharged until they were forthcoming. This proceeding, although perfectly just, so

exasperated the men — already annoyed by having been detained several months beyond their term of service—that, had it not been for the presence of mind and moderation of one of the lieutenants, the Colonel would certainly have been tarred and feathered on the instant. The affair was ultimately settled by the discovery of the offenders, and an arrangement that they should restore the tents or have the value of them deducted from their pay.

I ought, perhaps, to observe, that these tents had been secreted, to serve as accommodation to a party who were bent upon starting at once for the mines, and who were resolved to go as comfortably equipped as possible. They probably argued, that, as Government had failed in fulfilling its promise to them, they were entitled to make free with anything belonging to it as a set-off against unrequited extra services. I can only add, that I do not feel any surprise at such a step being taken, for the conduct of the Government towards the volunteers was a disgrace

to it. We had left the States less in the capacity of volunteers than of armed emigrants, depending upon the good faith of the legislature to make arrangements for such of us as chose to do so, to settle in the country we were sent, not only to conquer, but to colonize. But our term of service was permitted to expire, and some months were passed in absolute idleness; yet we got no remuneration, and were even obliged to give up our arms, and to turn out into this desolate and dangerous region without the means of defence, without shelter, and even without provisions.

Fortunately for us, there arrived here, at this crisis, one Colonel Stevenson, with a party of men from Pueblo de Los Angelos, the whole of them being on their way to the mines. To his influence we owed a supply of flint-lock muskets, in the proportion of one to every two men, twenty cartridges, and one month's rations; all of which we received as so much instalment on what was really due to us, namely, mileage and scrip, to say nothing of

our legal title to our one hundred and sixty acres of land. But even this was better than nothing, though we owed it to strange interference and to the generosity of the good old Commodore.

It was, doubtless, entirely attributable to the excitement of the moment that little more than passing heed was taken of a circumstance which, at any other time, would have been fraught with deep interest to us, namely, the discharge of the so-called mutineers of San José, who had been brought hither on board the Ohio, and were now liberated without trial, in consequence of the promulgation of a general pardon granted by the President of the United States to all military and naval offenders then in durance. No doubt, a court-martial would have acquitted the men, who, during their stay on board the Ohio, had been released from their irons; and, in so far as they were concerned, we all sincerely rejoiced at the event; but we regretted extremely that the extension of the pardon indiscriminately to all should have enabled "Black

Jack" to escape the punishment he so richly deserved.

We were no sooner our own masters again, than there commenced on all sides a series of the most active preparations for a journey to the mines. The plan adopted was to form bands of three, five, or ten, under the leadership of one of the number, whose name the party took, and continued to be distinguished by. A set of written rules was drawn up for the regulation of the general interests, these rules varying in certain points, according to the peculiar views of particular associations. The purport of the majority of them, however, ran as follows:—

"We, the undersigned, hereby agree to form ourselves into a party, to be denominated ———'s Mining Company, and to adhere to the following rules and regulations.

"1. That we shall each bear an equal share in all expenses incurred for the general advantage, such as the purchase of a yoke of oxen, a cart, horses, packs, &c.

"2. That we all proceed together to the gold mines, and that no man be allowed to

separate from the party without the general consent.

"3. That, in case of unavoidable separation, each person be allowed to take out an amount of goods or money equivalent to the original investment, less what he may have consumed or injured.

"4. That we work together in the mines, using the tools and property of the party in common.

"5. That each man be allowed to retain all he can make by digging, but that he shall contribute to the company his equal portion of the funds necessary for the purchase of food and other things for the common use.

"6. That in case of difficulty or danger, we stand by each other under all circumstances.

"7. That no sick man shall be abandoned, but every possible means adopted to restore him to health.

"8. That each man, in his turn, shall do his share of the general work, namely, cooking, attending to the horses, chopping wood, fetching water, &c.

"9. That any member separating himself

from the party without the general consent shall forfeit all that he has invested, unless such portion of it as the company may choose to award to him, to assist him in joining another party, or in seeking new 'diggings.'

"10. That any man proved guilty of stealing from or robbing any member of his company shall be immediately expelled, and forfeit the whole of his property."

Such is a correct outline of the kind of agreement by which the gold-hunters bound themselves, before proceeding to the mines. Some of these contracts were, however, somewhat at variance with the habits and practices of the contracting parties: one company, for instance, the members of which were distinguished for dishonesty and drunkenness, fully appreciating the advantages to a community of probity and sobriety, subscribed to two rules specially introduced; one of which was to the effect, that, at the close of each day's work, they should severally place the product of their labour in one common fund, to be afterwards divided into equal shares,

the periods of such division to be determined by the general consent of the company; and the second, that no spirituous liquors should be made use of by any of them, and that any member of the party found in a state of intoxication should be forthwith expelled.

In this particular instance, the rule relating to inebriety proved null in its effect, for, within three days after it had been subscribed to, four of the number were seen rolling in a state of intoxication about the town; with regard to the previous one, I can say nothing. I know that the party contrived to keep together till they reached the mines, but there, I subsequently ascertained, they quarrelled, separated, and were soon scattered.

Whilst our men were preparing for their departure, making purchases, packing provisions, and equipping themselves and their horses, the discovery of the body of one of our number cast a deep gloom over our spirits. He was found at the bottom of a well, with a deep cut over his head, evidently inflicted by a sharp instrument. An accordion, on which

he was in the habit of playing, was also found in the well, on the top of his body, as if it had been cast in after it. We never ascertained the real cause of this murder, but strongly suspected it to have been either the result of an old grudge, or of a jealous paroxysm on the part of some of the Spaniards, with whom he had always been at variance, and involved in serious broils. I was much attached to him, and sincerely lamented his sad end.

In the midst of all this excitement, I myself felt undecided whether to travel towards the mines, or in an opposite direction. My predilections were strongly turned to South America, the climate being more suited to my sickly state of health; but being disappointed of a companion, I determined, after many days' delay, to set off for the mines. But by this time nearly all the parties had been formed, and I found myself almost alone, in a deserted town, where there were no means of living, no business, and from which, if I remained much longer, there would be no chance of escape.

In this dilemma, I began looking up the stragglers; for, unless I succeeded in getting together a small party of my own, the only alternative left me would be the disagreeable and dangerous one of journeying alone. As may be imagined, the best men were already gone, and I therefore had to select such as I could find—an unfortunate circumstance for the kind of expedition I contemplated. However, I got together five individuals, who, consenting to my proposition, immediately subscribed to a code of regulations drawn up by myself, one of which was to the effect that all property, not purchased nor made use of avowedly for the common good, should be considered private, and respected accordingly.

The preliminaries being thus far arranged, my next step was to make the necessary purchases; but, to my great disappointment, oxen, horses, mules, carts, and in fact everything required for our expedition, had become scarce, and had increased inordinately in value; and, as our means were limited, this circumstance threatened to prove fatal to our under-

taking. Two hundred dollars were asked us for one yoke of oxen, which sum being too high for our exchequer, we declined the offer, although the animals were certainly in fine working order; and we finally struck a bargain for another yoke and a cart, at the price of one hundred and fifty dollars. Both of our cattle had been used up by hard work, and were in bad condition, one of them being, moreover, blind of an eye; but it was our last resource, and, for want of better at the price, we took them, and I now only awaited the funding of the common stock of cash, to pay for them.

Meanwhile, I sought to procure a horse for my own particular convenience, but my entire stock of money did not exceed forty dollars, and a portion of this had to be set aside, as my share of the price of the yoke and cart. Whilst I was deliberating how to make the most of my small capital, a coloured man of Monterey came to see me, who chanced to have a horse to dispose of. But he wanted fifty dollars for it, and refused to take a

cent less. I considered the bargain off, when, casting his eye on a handsome saddle which I had brought in parts from the lower country, and completed myself, he renewed his proposal, varied now by offering to let me have the animal for ten dollars and the saddle. To this arrangement I consented, on the condition of my approving of the steed, and we forthwith went out to look at him. A trial of his speed and action having satisfied me, the bargain was concluded in the most formal and legal manner before the Alcalde; and a paper was drawn up, setting forth the nature of the exchange, and describing the horse, his age—nearly, I suppose—his colour, peculiarities, and brand, and that the horse was the property of the seller at the time of the sale. My next step was to brand him again, on the hind-quarters, with a mark of my own; namely, a cross, seared with a red-hot iron ramrod.

These formalities and precautions are very necessary in California, where, horses being valuable, horse-stealing is considered almost a

national virtue; for, in spite of the severe pains and penalties against the offence, natives and foreigners disregard all notions of property in these animals, and never scruple to appropriate to themselves any they may find, or create an opportunity of catching. The brand, of course, renders them easy to be identified, in the event of their being met with again after they have once been taken away; though, in the course of horse-dealing, it is not at all unusual for a man to sell an animal which does not belong to him, and perhaps never did, leaving the unlucky purchaser to square accounts with the real owner, should the two chance to meet.

Halliday, another of our party, likewise succeeded in "making a trade" for a horse, or "swapping" for him, as the Yankees term the act of barter. He gave an epine watch and a few handsome articles of apparel which took the fancy of the Spaniard who made the exchange, and he went away chuckling over his bargain. His animal and mine were put up together in the school-house yard, and he

mounted guard over them for a couple of days, taking them out in the afternoon for exercise. On the third day, he went out a little way, at about four o'clock, and on his return, within half an hour after, discovered that his horse had been stolen. Mine was safe; and, as it was far superior to his, I could attribute the theft only to the Spaniard who had sold it to him, at what even Halliday thought a loss; or perhaps to one of the straggling volunteers, out of spite to Halliday, who was not a favourite with the men.

So much time having now been lost in preparation, I proposed that the members of my party should meet in my apartment, on a certain evening, for the purpose of paying over their respective shares to the common stock, in order to complete the purchase of our yoke and team. But, although every one agreed to meet, three of the party went that evening to Abrigos, and gambled away at *monté* every cent they possessed. We were thus left without sufficient funds to procure the means of transport; until Halliday, Parker, and my-

self, putting our scanty treasuries together, purchased two more horses; one with a very sore back, the other spirited enough, but small, and unfitted for heavy burdens.

We were much embarrassed and very uneasy concerning our companions, whom we did not like to leave behind at Monterey, well knowing the privations and misery they would have to endure; therefore, and notwithstanding their improvidence, we determined to permit them to accompany us. One of them had already, I should state, left us, and set off after another party, then *en route*, with whom he succeeded in coming up, and reaching the mines.

Having manufactured pack-saddles, and bestowed away our month's provisions, our cooking utensils, and other necessaries, and I having consented to allow my horse to be used for the pack of our two companions, the larger of the two other horses being reserved for a similar purpose, and the second as a resource, in case of a break down, we met, five in number, namely, Devin, Halliday, Drew,

Parker, and myself, all well armed, and in capital spirits, and set off upon our hazardous journey in the evening, determined to walk the whole way, rather than fatigue our horses, whose strength we knew would be severely tried.

CHAPTER XI.

The first bivouac—A stranger—A traveller's wallet—My companions—Californian cow-catching—The stranger's exploits in horse-finding — Novel experiment in farriery —Slap-jacks—Our fresh horses claimed—I lose my steed—Misfortunes thicken—News of my horse—His sagacity—Our journey resumed.

As it was somewhat late when we set out —for we were resolved not to pass another night in Monterey—a march of some miles across the deep sands leading to the Salina plains brought us to a full stop at a very beautiful and thickly-wooded part of the road, where we determined to pass the night. We placed our arms, packs, and saddles, against the venerable trunk of a tree, the rich, overhanging foliage and branches of which promised to afford us ample shelter and protection from the heavy dews. On each side of the road arose lofty trees; and through the

long avenue of luxuriant vegetation we could discern, in the far distance, the low, white-washed houses of Monterey on the one hand, and on the other a succession of romantic hills.

As soon as we came to a halt, one of the party set to work to chop wood, and we soon had a blazing fire almost in the middle of the road; a second began roasting the coffee; a third went in search of water; whilst I proceeded to tether the horses in a convenient spot between our encampment and a lofty hill in our rear, where there was abundance of grass, and they might easily be watched. To boil the water, broil the dried beef, and grind the coffee—or pound it rather—between two large stones, it being first deposited in a bag, were duties soon performed; and we sate down to a meal, simple enough, in all conscience, but which was heartily relished around that cheerful blaze, the conversation being made up of conjectures as to the result of our adventurous expedition.

Night had long thrown its shadows around

us, and we were seated, each of us upon a log, chatting cozily around the fire, whose flickering glare cast a peculiar glow upon surrounding objects, when we suddenly heard the tramp of horses, and in the course of a few minutes a singular-looking individual presented himself in our midst. His figure and general appearance were wild in the extreme. He was a man below the middle height, dressed in a short jacket, partially covered with fur, his legs being encased in leathers, reaching to the knees, a costume adopted by the Californians to protect their *calcineros* on a long journey. He wore a fur cap, from beneath which his hair stuck out in bristles, and his countenance was far from prepossessing, his features being sharp, and his small grey eyes restless and inquisitive, with a peculiar look of shyness. By his side hung a cutlass, a weapon rarely used ashore, even in California, and which, taken in connexion with his strange aspect, tended to produce in our minds an unfavourable impression of his intentions, as we did not know but he might

be a scout belonging to some of the desperate bands that, as we had been given to understand, infested the neighbourhood of Monterey. This impression was somewhat confirmed by the fact of the second horse which he led being without a rider.

The stranger bade us good evening, as he alighted from his beast, a compliment which we of course returned. He at once discovered us to be Americans, by our accent, and informed us he could not speak English. I in turn ascertained—as he addressed us in a mixture of Spanish and French—that he was a Frenchman; and he confirmed my suspicions, proceeding to inform me how he came to be in our company.

He had been employed by a Mr. R——, at the mission of San Miguel, to take care of his cattle and horses during his absence at the mines. His employer had promised to be back in two months, or three at the most, and to pay him handsomely for his services; but he having absented himself beyond the stipulated period, and the Frenchman being

sadly in want of money, he had taken two horses, and set out in search of him, selecting for his companion a sailor of whom he knew little or nothing, and from whom he was ultimately obliged to separate, as he ate up the provisions and rode the horses nearly to death, teazing them sadly by rolling about on their back, as though he were lying out on one of the yards of his ship. He got rid of him at Monterey, and resumed his journey alone. Our fire had attracted him, and he could not resist the temptation of joining company with us.

Having imparted this piece of information, without waiting for any invitation to join our party around the fire, he led away his horses to some little distance from us, where, removing their bridles and saddles, he fastened them by a hackamore to the tough branches of a tree, and, leaving them to feed off what they could pick up, returned to us, bringing back his saddles and a canvass bag, which he opened before us. It contained a quantity of *penoche*, which is, I believe, made of ground

Indian corn, and a little of which, mixed with cold water, makes a very refreshing drink; and a number of small boxes of salt, pepper, and coffee; a large bladder of lard—or Californian butter, as the Yankees jestingly call it; and, lastly, a quantity of broken biscuit, mixed up with bits of string, tow, thongs, and scraps of leather, a comb, a knife, and sundry other articles, too numerous to mention, but rather miscellaneous as an assortment.

He fumbled a good while in the second bag, until he produced a scrap of dirty and crumpled-up paper, which he handed me to read. It proved to be the written agreement between him and his employer, and was intended, I suppose, as a sort of certificate of his good intentions. As we were well armed, we had nothing to fear, even had his purpose been mischievous; but we were so glad to have a new companion—especially one who possessed two horses—that no difficulty was raised to his becoming one of our party; and as he appeared equally glad of the chance of company, he accepted our invitation, and

proceeded to make himself comfortable, by stretching his macheers and an undressed sheepskin before the fire, on which he extended himself, forming a pillow of his saddle, and placing his cutlass by his side.

We were all stirring by daylight next morning, and were preparing breakfast, when some of the officers of the Ohio, who were on a shooting excursion, came up. They accepted of our hospitality, and bade us farewell with many kind wishes for our success.

The deep sand considerably impeded our progress, but the country generally was picturesque and pleasing, the land being alternately of the richest and of the barrenest description, now rising into lofty hills, now stretching into plains, or sinking into deep valleys. We marched at the rate of not more than twenty miles a day, and I soon began to appreciate the character of my companions.

Halliday was a man of a strong constitution and powerful frame, and kept always in advance. Devin lagged behind, evincing a decided disinclination for our mode of travel-

ling. Parker, who had the care of our horses, proved utterly unfit for his charge. Drew was all carelessness: and as for myself, I felt that my place ought to have been in a snug apartment, with abundance of food and repose, to qualify me for the fatiguing journey before me. Monsieur Frederic, our new companion, beat us all hollow in activity, in energy, in endurance, and in spirits, and we were heartily glad of his company.

As we advanced further into the interior, we were enabled to form some idea of the general character of the country. In most instances, the sides of the mountains are covered with plentiful crops of wild oats, but trees and water are scarce, being, in fact, the two chief deficiencies both of Upper and Lower California. It was only at intervals of from ten to twenty miles that we met with a few trees and a pond, or a stream, where we could obtain a little shelter from a broiling sun, and sufficient wood and water to establish a tolerable encampment.

On the Salina plains we saw innumerable

herds of cattle, principally wild cows, with here and there a yet wilder-looking bull, which, pawing the ground and lowering his horns at our approach, simply out of bravado, would soon scamper off after his companions, already some distance a-head.

We encamped, the second night, in the neighbourhood of a *ranché*, where, upon procuring, after no small difficulty, a supply of fresh beef, we paid at the rate of a dollar for what was scarcely worth sixpence. As we were on the point of starting in the morning, a Spanish *ranchero*, of a very noble and dashing appearance, and mounted on a fine-spirited horse, came rattling up to us. Round the pommel of his saddle was cast one end of a lasso, ready for use; the other he kept swinging round and round his head, in such an artistical manner, that, as he surveyed us, I began to apprehend he had some design upon our cattle. However, he merely reined in his steed to salute us; and the next moment darted off, at full gallop, after one of the cows on the plain, which he noosed round her

horns, and then permitted to run before him, dexterously guiding her towards a house in the distance, where, upon an Indian making his appearance, the poor creature was driven into an adjacent *correl.*

I had often enjoyed the advantage of seeing the lasso used by the Californians, and ever marvelled exceedingly at the dexterity and strength they exhibit in securing the very largest animal in the herd. Whatever its power, the lasso overcomes it; and it is really wonderful to witness the skill with which they adapt their movements and the action of their horses to those of the ensnared animal; now bringing it short up, half dead with fatigue—then, after allowing it to breathe again, giving it rope to scamper off to the end of its tether; driving it sometimes with marvellous swiftness in one direction, then permitting it to follow the bent of its own inclination in another, until the wearied animal becomes a mere plaything in their hands, and is either quietly secured, or as quietly allows itself to be driven into a shed.

We passed the Salina plains, and came to a full stop at a place where three roads, or, more strictly speaking, pathways, branched off in different directions. We sought in vain for the track of a waggon, our sole resource in the absence of guides, and, lacking which, to find the right road was next to impossible. We halted, of necessity; and, after due consultation, despatched Halliday back across the plains to endeavour to procure the necessary information. On his return, he informed us that our route lay to the right, and in that direction accordingly we proceeded, notwithstanding the grumbling of our companions, who were now becoming clamorous, to be allowed to ride, for they vowed they could walk no further. Our horses were much in the same predicament; and I know not what we should have done but for Monsieur Frederic, who, coming to the rescue, assured them that, if they would only take courage, he would soon show them that he had not been living in California for nothing.

He was as good as his word; for, in the

course of another hour, during which time we had lost sight of him, he rejoined our party, leading a splendid-looking animal in a lasso. On inspection of it, however, we perceived a sore on its back of about one foot in extent; from which circumstance I concluded that it had been ridden until it became useless, and was then abandoned. But Monsieur Frederic was off again; and, in the course of another half hour, returned with a second horse, in much the same plight as the first; nor did he appear at all annoyed at the reproaches that were cast upon him for bringing such sorry beasts to the rescue. On the contrary, he only laughed, and shook his head knowingly, and winked, and fumbled in his canvass-bag, till he fished up the bladder of lard, and a couple of cloths, on which he proceeded to spread a portion of the contents of the bladder. I call them cloths, but they were, in reality, two strips torn off from an old shirt: these, being duly prepared, he applied them to the sores on the animals' backs, binding over the tender place a longer strip of the

same material; and on each side of the backbone a convenient padding, tying over the whole a folded blanket. He then pointed to his veterinary achievement with a confident air; intimating, that if the beasts would not go now, the fault was none of his. And go they certainly did; marvellously, considering their condition. One of them was, in its way, quite a natural curiosity, being completely broken-winded, with a cough like an earthquake, and having a most uncomfortable knack of throwing his rider in a very singular manner. On such occasions, when he was once on his knees, it was excessively difficult to get him on his legs again in a strictly upright posture; and more than once I fancied we must prop him up for the sake of the rider. Altogether, I never beheld such a miserable cavalcade; with the exception of my own horse, we had not one sound animal amongst us.

We encamped that night on the summit of a steep ascent, where there were a few trees and some thick bushes. Near us grew an

abundance of wild oats, amongst which we turned our horses, having first relieved them of their packs and saddles; and, lighting our fire, search was made for water at a dark-looking spot some short distance off, where we felt sure of finding a supply. It proved muddy, however; and we recommenced a long and anxious search, which fortunately terminated by our procuring a canfull of tolerable quality.

We had all lain down to sleep, except Monsieur Frederic, whose turn it was to watch; and I was dozing and dreaming, when his voice, as he indulged in a series of oaths in his native tongue, suddenly aroused me. I heard a plunging, and a wrestling, and trampling of hoofs, and sounds of blows, but without being able to discover the cause until I betook myself to the spot. By the light of the fire, I beheld him flourishing his cutlass over one of the horses, which, every now and then, he struck with the flat side of the weapon, whilst the animal struggled desperately to get away from him. In a few

seconds, the creature became tolerably quiet; and, as I drew nearer, I observed that it had been lassoed by the Frenchman, who, now bringing it to the ground, proceeded to probe its foot. The poor thing had been limping painfully along the last day or two, and Frederic was determined to ease it against its setting out on the morrow's journey. He soon extracted a large pebble from the creature's foot, and, fumbling in his canvass-bag, produced a piece of stout leather, some cord, and a sail-maker's needle, by the help of which, and the exercise of some ingenuity, he succeeded in fixing upon the hoof a very fair substitute for a shoe: at any rate, it promised to afford the poor beast protection for a time from the sharp stones, and I do not know whether the horse or his master was the better pleased at the success of this novel experiment in farriery. I know the animal's pace over the sand was considerably improved by it, and that Monsieur Frederic got great praise for his cleverness.

Before we started next morning, we held a

consultation as to the best means of husbanding our resources in biscuit, the result of which was, that we agreed to convert a portion of our flour into "slap-jacks." This primitive substitute for bread is manufactured by mixing up some flour and water in a tin, seasoning with salt, and frying in a pan of grease. It is the Californian and Yankee travellers' grand resource when biscuit and beef fail; and, though some over-fastidious stomachs may turn at the bare notion of eating such an unpromising preparation, I can only wish them such appetites as are got by rough exercise and privation, to ensure their eating slap-jacks with extraordinary relish. Frederic, Halliday, and myself, set to work upon the "jacks," and soon tossed up a sufficiency for our purpose; breakfast was then despatched, cans of water obtained, our packs and saddles re-adjusted, and we resumed our route: not, however, without serious squabbles with our three other companions, who positively refused to lend any assistance in performing the necessary labour. But to dis-

agree would have led to separation; and, for various reasons, we resolved to submit to the temporary inconvenience their idleness subjected us to, in the hope of preserving the numerical strength of our party; a precaution highly necessary.

The country through which we were now proceeding did not differ greatly from those portions we had already traversed. The same deficiency of trees, the same profuse growth of wild oats of the tallest description, the same undulating landscape — now sand, now rich soil, but the latter rendered unfruitful in consequence of the scarcity of water, and unfitted for the residence of man. Occasionally we came to extensive plains, covered with numerous herds of wild cattle and horses, where the herbage was eaten so close to the ground as to leave the whole surface bare; but, as the animals presented a sleek appearance, we inferred that they roamed to considerable distances; and, having exhausted the pasturage in one district, repaired to others, guided by their unerring instincts. We were

ourselves frequently surprised, after ascending the rugged steep of some barren hill-side, to discover, on the other descent, a superabundance of the richest grass and wild oats, amongst which we never failed to turn our horses whilst we rested.

Our next encampment was in the immediate vicinity of an extensive and beautiful lake, the surface of which was undisturbed, save by myriads of wild geese, ducks, and other water-fowl, that, on our approach, started up in alarm; but, after fluttering about, settled down on another part of the watery expanse. We could easily have shot some, but powder was too valuable a commodity to waste, and we left them unmolested. Besides, the toolies grew so thick and tangled, and the soil was so boggy, it would have been almost impossible to secure our game without incurring extreme personal risk. To the right of us, to the left, and in the distance, arose a succession of hills, covered with the most luxuriant vegetation, their summits crowned with stately pine, and oak, and palms; whose

outline, standing out in relief against an unclouded sky, rendered them singularly prominent features in the landscape. Altogether, the spot was most charming, and we all contemplated it with delight.

We continued our route past the hills which skirted the lake, until we reached an extensive plain some seven miles in breadth, commencing at the base of a chain of enormous mountains, and terminating only with the horizon. We were stopped by encountering two paths—one leading to the right over the mountains, the other branching off across the plain; and we felt greatly perplexed which to choose. Whilst we were discussing the matter, we beheld a Californian galloping towards us at full speed. This was an unexpected resource in our dilemma; and we all hailed the stranger's approach with satisfaction, save that Monsieur Frederic became very fidgety, and began looking about for some hiding-place for his horses. But there was no spot convenient for his purpose; so, making a virtue of necessity, he faced the new comer with a bold countenance.

This individual, having saluted us in Spanish, fixed his eyes upon Frederic's horses, and asked where he had procured them. The reply was to the effect that they had been purchased by him at Monterey. The Spaniard, however, claimed them at once, asserting that he had left them behind on the road, whilst he pushed forward to his *ranché;* and, in proof of his assertion, proceeded to compare the brand on the animals with that of the horse he bestrode. As it happened, one of them was not branded; but, as there appeared to be no question as to the identity of the mark on the other — a fine beast, though extremely sore-backed — we thought it prudent as well as honest to give it up; which we accordingly did, notwithstanding our regret at losing so valuable an auxiliary. We ascertained that our road lay across the mountains, and parted from the *ranchéro* with many thanks for the information he had afforded us.

The Spaniard had not been gone more than half-an-hour, when my horse became restive,

in consequence of his being laden with two extra muskets, which galled his sides as he walked. Parker, a tall, raw-boned Yankee, was unable to hold him, and ere I could come to his assistance, the animal had broken away from him, and set off, galloping across the plain, soon dashing the two pack-saddles with which he was laden to the ground, together with the muskets, the original cause of the mischief. We set off in pursuit, but were soon compelled to relinquish the chase, and to attend to a more important matter, namely, the picking up our stock of provisions, which lay scattered about all over the plain, in the horse's track, and the several articles which had been shaken out of the packs. Whilst we were thus occupied, Halliday continued the hunt after my horse; until, night setting in, we lighted a fire, and sat down around it, awaiting his return. We found that one of the packsaddles was smashed to pieces; that only about a third of our stock of biscuit had been recovered; that our flour-bag had burst, and was half emptied of its precious

contents; and that various articles were irretrievably gone, for the scrub and brush were so thick as to baffle the minutest search. Our muskets we found, as a matter of course, but we did not discover our crow-bar until the next morning.

Halliday returned to our encampment, or rather explored his way to it, guided by the light of our fire. He brought news of my horse, to the effect that it would probably be found at a *ranché* in the vicinity, belonging to one Don José. It appeared that, after a long and fruitless chase, he lost sight of the animal on the opposite side of the plain, and, looking about him, perceived a road which led him to a *ranché*. He made inquiry here, without at first procuring any information; until, having minutely described the lost beast, the *ranchéro* remembered that a neighbour of his, Don José, who lived at a *ranché* a few miles further on, had sold such a horse some time ago, and he doubted not but, finding itself near its former home, it had gone back to it. The polite *ranchéro* advised Halliday to return to our

encampment, and he would himself send to Don José, and request him to bring the horse to us in the morning, if his conjectures respecting it should prove correct. This advice he followed, and we anxiously looked forward for the dawn.

We were now compelled to remove our quarters, in consequence of the scarcity of wood; and, acting upon the suggestions of Monsieur Frederic, who seemed never at a loss, established ourselves on a part of the plain most frequented by the herds of wild cattle, whose dried manure supplied us with tolerable fuel, though it kept the watches busily employed collecting it, as it soon burnt out.

At about ten o'clock next morning a boy came up to us, leading my horse, which, as the *ranchéro* conjectured, had found its way back to its former master, Don José. We gave the lad some powder and a few percussion-caps, with which he was highly delighted, and were preparing for a fresh start, when we bethought ourselves that it would be as well to go to the

ranchéro whom Halliday had first seen, and inquire our way, he having forgotten to do so on the previous evening. Accordingly, we set off across the plain, and were directed to make for Don José's *ranché*, where we should learn further particulars. Don José's directions were somewhat peculiar, and did not appear altogether clear to us at the time. However, we replenished our canteens and bottles with some excellent water, and, thanking the Don, resumed our journey, until we reached another plain, at the outermost verge of which stood a solitary tree—our goal. Towards it we advanced with renewed courage and increased speed; and, having at length come up to it, encamped there for the night.

CHAPTER XII.

An unpleasant intrusion—Indian horse-stealers—Cayotes—The road lost sight of—Our dilemma—Unexpected resource—Monsieur Frederic's canvass-bag—The ascent of the mountains—In luck's way—The right road at last—Symptoms of hasty travelling—Pueblos de San José—A resolution.

Our march next day proved a long one, although we made little progress in advance, as our route was circuitous, and finally obstructed by an immense lagoon, overgrown with toolies, or bulrushes, and along the borders of which we were compelled to proceed up to our knees in mud and water, and sometimes even higher. We came to the end of the marsh at last, but found ourselves so fatigued that further advance was impossible; we therefore selected a fitting spot, and made the usual preparations for passing the night there.

Although excessively wearied, I was unable to compose myself to sleep, and lay half-sleeping, half-waking, watching the glimmer of the fire. Suddenly—about half-past one—I heard a low sound amongst the bushes, at a little distance off; and, listening more attentively, at last plainly distinguished footsteps. We had adopted the precaution of sleeping a short distance from the fire; so that our movements were not easily discernible. I crept stealthily towards Halliday, having first grasped my pistols, which I always kept ready for use under my head, and with some difficulty succeeded in arousing him, desiring him to keep perfectly quiet, but on the alert. We were in such a position, at this time, as to command a view of our horses and property, which had been left under the care of a sentinel, Drew, who had fallen fast asleep, his head resting on one of the animals which had stretched itself on the ground by his side. We watched a few minutes, and then beheld two Indians stalk cautiously out from amongst the bushes, and advance towards our fire,

evidently to ascertain if any of us were stirring. The inspection proving satisfactory, as it seemed, one of them approached the sleeping sentinel, and cast a lasso around my horse's neck, whilst the other laid his hands on one of the saddles and a pack. I took steady aim at the horse-stealer, and, discharging my pistol as he was on the point of leading the animal away, perceived that the ball took effect in the man's right shoulder, for he dropped the end of the lasso, and, carrying his hand to the wound, leaped up, and disappeared in the bush, his companion instantly following his example. The report of the weapon brought our comrades about us in a minute, in a state of great alarm, and all equally eager to ascertain the extent of the danger. The story was soon told, and our sentinel got severely rebuked, for there was little doubt but the Indians, tempted by the carelessness of our sentinel, intended to take advantage of it by stealing as much as they could carry off. Having adopted additional precautions in the event of a second surprise, we lay down again.

But our troubles were not over, for several times we were obliged to get up and run after our horses, which, being tied up to the low bushes by leathern ropes, were set free by the *cayotes*—a species of animal something between a fox and a dog—that devour leather with avidity, and are ever on the watch to procure it. We lost several of these ropes, which are frequently converted into temporary bridles by passing them from the neck around the nose in an ingenious manner, completely obviating the use of head-stalls or bit. They are often of the handsomest description, and chiefly made of leather, which the *cayotes* nibble away in a very short time, ten minutes at most sufficing for them to entirely demolish the most solid of them. It may readily be imagined, therefore, that, between watching for *cayotes* and thieving Indians, our repose that night was not of the soundest kind, and that, when morning came, we were none of us much refreshed.

On reaching the base of the mountains I have already alluded to, we were exceedingly

perplexed, for here we lost all traces of the road. The wild oats grew in abundance, and proved a serious obstacle to our progress, for not only did they effectually obliterate all indications of the roads that passed through them, but they caught our horses' legs, and severely annoyed them. Once we believed we had hit upon the right track; but, after pursuing it for some distance, we came to a second exactly like it, and did not until then discover that they were formed by wild deer. To increase the discomfort of our position, our three indolent companions expressed their determination to follow one of these narrow paths which wound round the side of the declivity, whilst we were of opinion that our better plan would be to prosecute our journey across the mountains, trusting to our knowledge of the direction of the mines, which we knew lay on the other side of the range. As we could not prevail upon them to accompany us, and it chanced that our horses and provisions were equally divided, we separated, each party continuing the road selected by the leader. Our

companions had not, however, proceeded more than two miles before they repented of their rashness; the path they had followed led down the mountain, and not up it: and as they were certain they must cross the chain, they thought it best to retrace their steps, which they accordingly did, coming up to us almost exhausted by the extra exertions their obstinacy had entailed upon them.

Wearily, too, did we mount the rugged slopes of those mountains, under a broiling sun, to which we were fully exposed, panting for water, and anxiously seeking for it, and for a few trees under which we might procure an hour's shelter and rest. But summit arose above summit in interminable succession, each appearing impassable, and, in our uncertainty as to our being in the right direction, offering additional obstacles to surmount, without the charm of hope to encourage us to persevere. Our poor horses likewise suffered intensely, and we were in constant fear of their falling down from sheer exhaustion. At length we attained the summit of another acclivity, where

ON THE ROAD TO THE MINES.

there were a few small trees, and under these we lay down, easing our animals of their burdens, that they also might rest awhile.

As we lay conversing upon the one absorbing topic, namely, the uncertainty of our being in the proper track, the Frenchman, who had been fumbling in his canvass-bag, drew out of it a pocket-compass, and asked me if it would serve us as a guide. This was indeed a resource; and, remembering the bearings of the mines to be N.N.W., we experienced little difficulty in ascertaining that we were journeying almost in a direct line towards them, although perhaps somewhat out of the regular track, as we had not yet come up with any signs of a beaten road. This discovery imparted fresh life to the party; and we set off again in capital spirits, notwithstanding we suffered so much from thirst.

A couple of hours' march up the sides of the mountains brought us to the summit of the loftiest, when the scene before us suddenly changed from a country bare of wood, to one where the oak, pine, and beech flou-

rished in primitive grandeur and abundance, the trunks of many being several yards in girth. The shade proved most grateful, and rendered our travelling, for several miles, almost agreeable, such a relief was it to be protected from the scorching rays of the sun.

We emerged upon a dangerous steep, the descent of which was extremely painful and difficult; the path—if it could be so called—being blocked up by large pieces of rock, stones, and pebbles. On each side of us were deep ravines, into which we would gladly have plunged for water, had there been any in them. But it was in vain that we peered into their depths in search of it; their beds were dry, although evidently the course of rapid torrents during the rainy season. As we proceeded, the country once more resumed its barren aspect, save that in the distance we could perceive high table-lands, apparently clothed with verdure, and stretching away on our right; whilst to our left, and beneath us, a gloomy plain undulated, on which not a

tree nor a patch of grass grew, to afford the least relief to the fatigued eye.

As the evening drew near, it became intensely cold, as is usual in this region, and the sudden change was far from pleasant, for it augmented our bodily discomforts. We sought for a convenient halting-place, as further progress was becoming impossible, and fixed upon a spot of ground near which we had observed a dark circle that led us to hope for water. Nor were we disappointed; for, notwithstanding it turned out to be a mere puddle, about ten feet wide and six inches deep, we were but too glad to slake our thirst at it, and to return thanks for this providential discovery. As for our poor horses, they were in a pitiable condition; and unless we had chanced to meet with this pool, we must have been under the necessity of abandoning them, as they must inevitably have dropped dead of thirst.

Another agreeable surprise awaited us at this spot, namely, the appearance of a herd of wild cattle, one of which Devin shot; so that

we managed to get up a tolerably handsome feast off fresh beef, and to put some by for the morrow's store. A cheerful supper wound up our day's perplexities and troubles, and, the watch being set, we lay down to sleep. We had not been long reposing, ere we were awakened by a most terrific noise, which at first we had some difficulty in making out; but Monsieur Frederic soon set us at ease, by informing us that it proceeded from the wolves and prairie-dogs engaged in devouring the carcass of the cow we had killed, and the remains of which had been left on the spot where she was skinned. This was true enough; for in the morning we found nothing left of her save the bare skeleton, and a drove of hungry *cayotes* still lingering about it, that scarcely seemed disposed to move on our approach.

We felt greatly refreshed by our night's rest; and proceeded to replenish our canteens and bottles at the puddle, previously to setting out again. Our horses, too, appeared all the better, and we renewed our march, directing our steps by the compass.

We had advanced several miles, when we perceived, on our right, but considerably out of our line of march, what we at once recognised as a waggon-track, and hurrying on, were not a little gratified to find that our surmises were correct, and that our compass had proved a true guide. We now regarded our difficulties as being at an end, especially when we observed a moving speck far a-head of us, which we could distinguish to be a team of oxen, advancing in the direction towards which we were ourselves journeying. A few miles further, and our conjectures were set entirely at rest; for we emerged upon a wide, level, and well-beaten road, bestrewn with fragments of carts, broken wheels, and other similar evidences of traffic, indicating the recent passage of a party bound for the mines.

That night we had plenty of good water, abundance of beef, a surplus of grass for our horses, good fuel, and a delightful resting-place, perfectly sheltered, and where we slept soundly. And thus we marched onwards, encountering every day additional evidences

not only of the traffic on that road, but of the haste with which the travellers journeyed towards their destination, some of them having left their logs still burning, or abandoned their broken-down horses, whose carcasses lay putrifying in the middle of the road, and tainting the atmosphere far and wide. The fires were to us a certain indication of the proximity of good water, and we therefore adopted it as a rule to encamp for the night on such spots as these, whether our day's journey had been long or short.

We were now close to Pueblo de San José; and, as I had by this time amply tested by experience the relative merits of my companions, I called Monsieur Frederic and Halliday aside, and informed them of my intention to separate from our three indolent comrades, whom we might leave behind at Pueblo, where they would have an excellent chance of either joining some other party, or where, if they preferred so doing, they might remain. We had done our duty by them, I considered, in bringing them from Monterey, after the

imprudent loss of their money, and they now must prove a heavy charge to us; so that I felt it to be the most prudent course to divide the party. With this understanding we discontinued the conversation, being resolved to take advantage of the first opportunity to bring about our project.

CHAPTER XIII.

Arrival at Pueblo de San José—Meeting with Volunteer officers—Sudden fortunes—An old friend under a new face—Description of Pueblo—A Yankee mill and miller—"Not to be done"—Bickerings—Break-up of the party—Continuation of the journey with one companion.

We arrived in sight of Pueblo de San José in the course of a few days; and although the distance from Monterey is only about ninety miles, yet it appeared to us much greater, from the difficult and painful nature of the route. To the left of the town runs a stream of water, about ten feet wide, which continues parallel with the road upon which we now stood. On its banks we perceived a *cavallard* of horses, a few of which appeared in good condition, but the rest were miserable, worn-out hacks. Close to it stood a couple of tents, and, approaching them, we found that

one was occupied by some volunteer officers from Pueblo de los Angelos, and the other by a Spaniard and his wife—a very fine, though somewhat masculine-looking woman.

It appeared that they were all resting here with their horses, in order to make a bold and continuous push for the mines. They had an immense advantage in possessing so many horses, for, when those they rode got tired, they could mount others, and thus proceed without delay. They had already travelled several hundred miles, and had been obliged to halt here, from utter inability to proceed further without a few days' rest. The place was well wooded, and had an abundance of grass and water, so that we soon formed an encampment.

Our stock of flour having run short, we sent one of our party into the town, for the purpose of purchasing some. He soon returned with the information that the miller had none ready, there being an unusual demand for the article, and that we should have to wait until morning for it. Parker being

very much in want of shoes, he and I took a walk into the town in the evening, to inquire the price and purchase a pair, if we could find a good fit. We entered the shop of a German named Weaver, who had already realized more by the gold mania than any man in the surrounding country. He had been greatly embarrassed in his business, previous to the discovery of the mines, but had since engaged in a number of extensive speculations connected with the provision trade and dry goods, by which, in the course of a few months, he had realized an ample fortune.

In this store, to our great surprise, we found one of our old comrades of the volunteers rigged out in the sprucest manner, and looking more like a New York dandy than a shopman. He was receiving wages at the rate of one hundred dollars a month, no small improvement on his former condition. It seems that on the disbanding of the regiment he had purchased a mule and a supply of *serapas*, and with this stock in trade had made the best of his way to Pueblo. I know

not what success he had had peddling among the Spaniards, but, on his arrival at Pueblo, he was engaged as an assistant by Mr. Weaver, who required some one who could speak English in his store, in consequence of the enormous increase of his Yankee customers. We looked over a great number of ready-made shoes, the lowest priced at seven dollars a pair, but could not find any to fit.

Pueblo is a good-sized town, and contains about 4,000 inhabitants. It has all the evidence of being a thriving and progressive place, differing in this respect from all the other towns that I had hitherto seen in California. The buildings were constructed as much in the Yankee as in the Spanish style, a number of Mormons having come here at an early period, and built several hundred neat wooden houses and cottages, which formed a picturesque contrast to the heavy old *adobè* residences of the native inhabitants. This town is destined to become a place of very great importance. Being situated on the direct route to the gold mines, a trade had already

sprung up that promised to enrich all who could procure merchandize. Two or three American boarding-houses had already been established, the proprietors of which were making money fast, the rate of payment exacted by them being extravagantly high; and the stores in which articles of wearing apparel were sold were continually filled with customers, the people here dressing more showily even than in Monterey. One of the points upon which male vanity piques itself here, is the wearing of the gaudiest-coloured linings in the *calcineros*, which, in order to display them, are left open from the knee downwards.

The Mexican laws were still maintained here as in Monterey; but the Alcalde was American, and matters seemed tolerably well regulated.

Pueblo is decidedly one of the prettiest towns in California, and, as regards both climate and cheerfulness of aspect, superior to any that I had as yet seen. Unlike all the others, it is situated upon level ground, and is

surrounded by plains, which are for the most part well covered with pasturage, and abundantly stocked with cattle.

In the morning, when we went to look after the flour, I was not a little surprised to find a Yankee mill, a Yankee miller, and a Yankee yoke of oxen, the latter having been brought across the mountains from the States. The miller, a tall, good-natured looking fellow, sold us the flour we required at a very reasonable price, and informed us, in answer to our inquiries, that his employer was making a rapid fortune, as there was a great demand for flour, and he had the best mill in the country. A saw-mill had also been recently erected in the neighbourhood, but, owing to a scarcity of water, or a negligence on the part of its proprietor, its operations had ceased, and all building was for the present suspended for want of boards and scantling.

As Parker and I were returning to camp, we stopped for a few moments at the officers' tent, just to say good evening. Here we found their Spanish friend, who seemed greatly

taken with my pistols, and who, as if to enhance the value of them in my estimation, proposed to exchange one of his best horses for them. But in this, as in a previous instance, I positively refused to part with them, and we returned towards our camp. Next morning Halliday, who had been looking after the horses, came in with the news that the Spaniard had said to him, that he would be willing to double the price he had offered. Now, I was greatly attached to these weapons, and had intended carrying them back with me to the States, as a *souvenir* of my campaigns, but it seemed as if fate was determined that I should not gratify so simple a desire. Every man I met seemed to eye them with envy, and to consider by what means he could transfer them from my possession to his. I therefore thought it useless to resist much longer, and accordingly went with Halliday to the Spaniard's *cavallard*. The latter offered me a couple of horses for them, but, although good ones, they were very thin and had evidently been ridden very hard. I re-

fused the exchange, but declared that if he would allow me to choose from amongst the animals, the pistols were his. This he agreed to, on condition that I should only select one; so, casting my eyes around, I picked out a jet black steed, of silken coat and exquisite symmetry. We immediately lassoed him, in order the better to examine him, and fortunately discovered that he was dead lame. Congratulating myself that I had not made the exchange, I bade the Spaniard good morning, and returned to my quarters.

Our encampment was picturesquely enough situated beneath the spreading arms of a huge tree, and shut in on every side by masses of foliage, which hid the town and the road from our sight. Monsieur Frederic and I occupied ourselves in chopping wood with our axes, and Halliday looked after the horses. Drew and Devin were entrusted with the alimentation of the fire, and the preparation of the coffee. On our return, we found these interesting youths stretched on the turf, apparently unconscious that they had any

duties to perform, and as soon as Halliday made his appearance, they commenced a tirade against him about their supper.

"What a humbug you are," said Mr. Drew, "to be amusing yourself strolling about, when you ought to be grinding the coffee! At this rate, we shan't have supper till nine."

"Halliday always sneaks away when there is anything to be done," quoth Mr. Devin.

"You are unjust," replied Halliday, indignantly; "I am always ready to contribute to the comfort of the party. I was the last to grind the coffee, and the last but one to make the fire. Besides, I have been looking after the horses."

"Now, boys," said I, thinking this a fitting opportunity for the execution of my project, "I must have my say in this matter. When we first formed ourselves into a party, I had hoped that the circumstances in which we were placed, and the object which we had in view, would have taught us the necessity of forbearance and mutual reliance; but the jealous and angry feelings that have marked our

progress thus far, and the little probability that I see before us of a better understanding, have forced me to a conclusion, at which I have most unwillingly arrived, that we are but ill adapted to travel as a company, and that we shall best consult our interests by separating at once."

After some discussion, in which a good deal of unpleasant feeling was exhibited, the suggestion was ultimately agreed to, and we broke up into two parties, the one consisting of Drew, Devin, and Parker, and the other, of Halliday, Frederic, and myself.

It now remained to be seen which of us would get to the mines first; and in order to lose no time, I and my two companions started at an early hour on the following morning, leaving our quondam friends in the enjoyment of their slumbers. My horse being large and strong was packed with the provisions; the two spare animals, Frederic's lame horse which had long since worn off its leather shoe, and the broken-down Rosinante formerly ridden by Devin, being too completely "used up" to

be of much further service. My companions mounted them, nevertheless, and I accompanied them on foot, although worn out by constant fatigue. We passed through the town, and then pursued a road which branched off to the right. We had not proceeded far, when I became quite faint and ill, and Frederic, having some bowels of compassion, immediately dismounted, and told me to get up in his place, saying that he could ride one of the other animals. But this he found impossible, for the poor beast broke down a few miles further, and he was obliged to walk. Not appearing to relish this, I proposed to resign to him the horse I was riding, and he was glad enough to accept it. I again tried to pursue my way on foot, but found it impossible to proceed.

Monsieur Frederic now observed that he feared we should never get on to the mines under the circumstances; that he had a friend living at a *ranché* in the neighbourhood, and that he thought it advisable to go to him and recruit both himself and his horses. I replied

that if he had made up his mind to quit us, we would give him a third of the provisions in consideration of his leaving the worst of the horses with us, as we might be able to use him for our reduced pack. He seemed very well pleased with the arrangement, and we accordingly undid the pack on the plain, and gave him as liberal a proportion of our stores as we could afford. Bidding us farewell, he struck off to the left from the regular road, and was soon lost in the distant woods.

I was now left with only one companion, and that close to that stage of the route where travellers begin to anticipate the greatest difficulties, for here they pass the last regular town to be met on the way northward.

CHAPTER XIV.

A faint heart—Second thoughts—Mission of San José—Effects of Mexican apathy—"Ugly customers"—The road again—A comfortless prospect—Meeting with Governor Mason—Indian villages—An extinguisher upon sentiment—Arrival at Livermore's farm—Effects of a bad reputation—Road-side adventure—The San Joachin Valley—Junction with a Monterey convoy.

The road now branched off into two different directions, the one leading to San Francisco, and the other to the mines. We turned our backs upon the former; when, after proceeding some little distance, my companion, who had been riding for some time in silence, affected no doubt by a sense of isolation and the difficulties that presented themselves to his imagination, suddenly observed to me—

"I don't like the appearance of the road; the country around seems to be getting more

barren and gloomy at every step. When I consider how poorly we are provided for wintering in the mountains, and the long journey that we have yet before us, I am inclined to think that we had better give up all idea of gold digging, and start at once for San Francisco."

"To become the laughingstock of such of our old comrades as might chance to be thrown in our way. No, no, Halliday; we must not be so easily diverted from our purpose. It is a point of honour with me to proceed, until something really does occur, to justify me to my own conscience for abandoning it. Besides, I want to show those youths we have left behind that we can get along without them. Cheer up, and reflect better on it. It is obviously the more prudent course for us to proceed to the mines. San Francisco must be at present completely deserted; but, even were it otherwise, I should like to know what employment we could possibly find there? On the other hand, I have little doubt that we shall not be many days at the mines

before we shall have obtained sufficient gold to purchase ourselves a tent, and pay all current expenses. No, we had better persevere, and trust to Providence to aid us."

"Perhaps you are right," replied Halliday gloomily; "but, I must own, our prospects are anything but cheering."

The scene was certainly but ill calculated to sustain one's spirits. We were now in the midst of a large plain, scantily covered with vegetation, and unprotected by any sort of foliage. A cold and piercing wind swept over it from time to time, betokening the near approach of winter. We had not proceeded above a mile after the above conversation, when the sore-backed horse fell with the pack, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we could get him on his legs again.

"You see," said my companion, fortified in his forebodings by this little incident, "how impossible it is for us to proceed further on this route; neither our horses nor ourselves can stand it. Let us turn back, and proceed to San Francisco."

"Be it so," was my reply; "you know that I cannot travel alone, so that I must make up my mind to take whichever direction pleases you."

We accordingly turned back, but had not proceeded many steps, when my vacillating companion, rendered still more doubtful of the prudence of his suggestion by the easiness of his victory over me, suddenly stopped short and exclaimed—

"You must think me very weak-minded, but, after all, I cannot help coming round to your opinion. Let us go to the mines. It is worth the risk."

Towards the mines then our horses' heads were again turned. Our pack had been thoroughly arranged, so as to give the poor animal that bore it as little pain as possible. He got along better than we had expected, but we were every now and then obliged to lash him from behind with our whips, to keep him alive. As we proceeded, the numbers of dead horses and mules that we found scattered about on the route had quite a depressing

effect on our spirits, and I could see by Halliday's lengthened visage that, only for the shame which he felt at changing his mind so often, he would have again suggested the prudence of retracing our steps.

Towards evening, we came in sight of the mission of San José, which is situated upon some hills overlooking an immense plain, dotted here and there with cattle. Viewed at a distance from the road, it appeared in excellent repair, and the large out-offices, with their tile roofs, contrasted prettily with the high trees that rose above the long *adobè* wall that seemed to form the enclosure of the establishment. Turning, however, to our right, we found that we had only seen one end of the mission, and that this wall did not stretch across the front. To our surprise, everything connected with the establishment seemed to be in a state of the most deplorable decay. The *corps de logis* contained a suite of spacious and lofty rooms, with a large piazza in front. The façade itself had once been whitewashed, but the dark tint of the *adobè* had

gradually pierced through the lime, giving the walls a sober hue, which added greatly to the ancient and venerable appearance of the building. A little further on, on the road, and adjoining this part of the mission, stood the remains of an immense number of small rooms, very regularly laid out, which were formerly occupied by the Indians connected with it. Very few of these apartments have any covering, the materials of which the roof was composed having been long since torn away for other purposes. On the opposite side of the road are several comfortable *adobè* houses, and adjoining them we discovered a basin about ten feet square, and plastered with cement on the inside, which had been supplied by artificial means with water from a hot spring in the neighbourhood, and must have formed a most luxurious bath for the use of the priests. On entering the interior of the mission, we found an immense courtyard, surrounded with sufficient stabling for the accommodation of several hundred horses. The church is about forty feet long by thirty wide, and of

the simplest possible construction. At the rear of these buildings lies a neglected orchard and garden, which had once been exceedingly productive. In short, the general plan of this immense establishment bore evidence to its having been at one time a well organized and comfortable place, supplied in profusion with all the necessaries, and even luxuries, of life. It is now only a standing reproach to the Mexican government, and the lazy successors of the Jesuits.

The population of the mission consists of about three hundred persons, the majority of whom are Indians, and no small proportion Americans, all of whom are evidently of the most depraved and abandoned habits. From the specimen which I saw of them standing half drunk at the entrance of a grog-store into which part of the buildings had been converted, I took care to look at the priming of my pistols, and to keep a close watch on our horses. The Indians are almost black, and have the usual characteristics of long, neglected hair flowing in tangled locks about their shoul-

ders, flat noses, thick lips, low foreheads, and bushy eyebrows, an appearance in perfect keeping with their mental characteristics, which do not elevate them above the condition of the brute. The Americans whom I saw were a hard-looking set of customers, who seemed to have been long out of the pale of civilization; and I must confess that they inspired myself and my companion with some degree of apprehension.

We had no money with us of any consequence; but our horses, saddles, arms, and a few other articles in our possession, were sufficient temptations for an attack upon us, every kind of property having risen enormously in value, in consequence of the immense influx of foreigners that had taken place since the discovery of the gold mines. Horses that could formerly have been purchased for three or four dollars now readily brought from one hundred and fifty to two hundred, and weapons of defence could with difficulty be procured for money. As to blankets and *serapas*, which served the double purpose of beds by

night and cloaks by day, they fetched almost fabulous prices.

With the knowledge of these facts, and an *entourage* that was far from reassuring, we felt that we should be safer on the road than at the mission. We accordingly purchased some corn for our horses, and proceeded on our route. A few miles further on, we found ourselves between lofty hills, those to the right being covered with wild oats, whilst on the left everything looked black and dreary, all traces of vegetation having been burned up by the Indians, who sometimes adopted this method of annoying the Yankee traveller.

On arriving at a sort of hollow, filled with water, which lay opposite a narrow and fertile valley, shut in by a couple of hills, we dismounted, and prepared to encamp, there being plenty of grass for our horses, who could roam about without being picketed. On glancing at one of the most abrupt and loftiest of the precipices by which we were surrounded, I observed some cows browsing, at an immense height, on the sides of a declivity so steep

ON THE ROAD TO THE MINES—ENCAMPING FOR THE NIGHT.

that no human being could have stood upon them for five minutes without becoming giddy. But these animals, owing to a frequent scarcity of food in the valleys, are habituated to seek it on these dizzy eminences, which contain some spots of rich pasturage.

Our encampment this evening was cold and cheerless, the wind blowing a perfect hurricane. Sweeping along the road for some distance, it became obstructed by the hills in front of us, and, winding round the valley, spent itself on our devoted heads. Having vainly sought about for wood, we were compelled to make the best fire we could, of dried manure. We then pounded our coffee, and a good warm cup of this refreshing beverage restored us to some little sense of comfort. We had just finished arranging our blankets and muskets, on a gentle descent near our fire, when we observed a small party moving along the road. It was composed of three persons, two riding in advance, and the third driving a mule and small cart, of Yankee construction.

"It is Governor Mason, as I live!" exclaimed Halliday, jumping to his feet. "I must go and speak to him. He is on his return from the mines, and may bring us some news."

I was too much fatigued to accompany my comrade, but nevertheless awaited his return with interest. He only remained absent a few minutes.

"It was the Colonel, sure enough," said he. "I asked him how matters were going on at the mines, and he told me that, although there were a great many privations and hardships to endure, an industrious fellow, in the possession of good health, could make plenty of money by digging. To my inquiries whether, in case he should not succeed at this work, he had a chance of obtaining any other sort of employment, his answer was equally encouraging."

"Well, I hope you are at last satisfied," I rejoined. "I told you all that before; but it seems nothing but the assurances of the Governor himself can bring conviction home to your mind. I hope that this is the last time

that I shall hear anything more of your doubts and indecision."

My companion, somewhat piqued at my remark, laid himself sulkily down on his blanket, and soon fell asleep.

As Colonel Mason's name has been mentioned, I may be permitted to introduce here a slight sketch of a man whose position has brought him into notoriety, and rendered him an authority but too frequently quoted on the extent and nature of the resources of the country placed under his jurisdiction.

In person the Colonel is tall, with very coarse features, light hair, and rough and unpolished manners. He is one of those men who mistake rudeness for decision, and who look upon the courtesies and amenities of life as incompatible with the character of a soldier. I believe that he has many good qualities, amongst which is a love of order and justice; but the very nature of his profession seems to have contracted his views, and rendered them by far too despotic and unconciliatory for the difficult position in which

he was placed. The person chosen for the governorship of California, at this period, should have been not merely a soldier, but a man possessed of some statesmanlike qualities —one, in short, who could have thrown oil upon the troubled waters, in the absence of effectual civil law; whilst, on the contrary, every step taken by this gentleman invariably gave rise to dissatisfaction and discontent, and, in the end, to complete anarchy.

A new country has as much need as an old one of able and high principled men in the executive department; and, had those who first exerted American influence on this peninsula combined the requisite qualifications, an immense amount of injustice would have been prevented, and a course of policy avoided which has tended greatly to lower the character of the home Government. In fact, so sick were the inhabitants of the country at this period of military rule, that almost every spark of patriotism and attachment to the flag of the United States had been extinguished in the breasts of the settlers.

During the night, the hills resounded with the shouts of drunken Indians, and we deemed it prudent to keep watch alternately over the horses. Proceeding on our journey next morning, we soon came in sight of an Indian village, the houses of which were of a conical form, and constructed of mud and dead foliage. The entrance consisted of a low hole near the foundation, through which the inmates are obliged to creep. These huts bore a close resemblance to beehives; so closely packed were they with swarms of half-naked Indians, who seemed to have scarcely room to turn in them. There being little here to invite the attention of the traveller, we passed on, and soon came to a larger village, built in somewhat a different style, and having a much more picturesque character.

The houses were, for the most part, constructed of wood in its unplaned state, and, in some instances, still covered with the bark. Few of these habitations reached a greater elevation than the height of an ordinary man, and the entrances were, as usual, mere holes.

Forming a pretty background to this little group, stood a cluster of stately pines and palm-trees; while in front lay a gently undulating and fertile plain, dotted with cattle, and surrounded with charming hills, richly clothed with vegetation. I was so enchanted with the romantic beauty of the spot, that I could not refrain from giving expression to my feelings; but Halliday, who was of that dull and unimaginative mould so simply but naturally described by Wordsworth—

> "Nature ne'er could find the way
> Into the heart of Peter Bell;
> In vain, through every changeful year,
> Did Nature lead him as before;
> A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was *nothing more*"—

killed all my enthusiasm by the remark, that "it was very pretty, but that a good beefsteak, smothered in onions, would add immensely to the effect." These Indians were, however, miserably poor; and all we could obtain from them was a little *pinoli*,

which, being put into a cup of water, formed a most grateful and refreshing beverage.

The next stage to Livermore's farm was exceedingly tedious. We were lucky enough, however, to reach it before night; and we encamped within a mile of the house, close to the wooden fence which encloses the ground where the horses are allowed to run. The owner of this farm had settled early in the country, and had obtained possession of immense tracts of land, which, however, as far as I could judge, at this season of the year, were more remarkable for quantity than quality. Obtaining permission to picket our horses inside the fence, we set to work to collect as much grass and straw as possible for them. This, however, proved to be anything but an easy task, and our poor animals made but a sorry meal of it. We fared better, my companion having succeeded in purchasing some beef at the house. He had some difficulty, at first, in obtaining it, owing, as he presumed, to the annoyances to which the family were subjected by the visits of the

numerous travellers journeying along this route to the mines. Mr. Livermore told him that he felt great pleasure in affording his countrymen every facility while they conducted themselves properly; but that, in many instances, they had wantonly done great injury to his farm. He inquired where we were going to encamp; and, on finding that we had located ourselves near the fence, expressed a hope that we would not take any of the stakes for fuel, as they had been cut and sunk at considerable expense. We were determined to leave a better reputation behind us than our predecessors, and, though sorely pushed for it, left the palings untouched. We managed, at length, to build up a tolerable fire; and a shallow stream, which skirted the road, supplying us with excellent water, we were, on the whole, far from being objects of compassion.

Whilst we were at supper, a couple of horsemen rode up to us, whose appearance, on a more isolated part of the road, would have been calculated to greatly disquiet us.

They were armed *cap-à-pie* with leathern coats, leather breeches, rifles, pistols, and long knives, this formidable panoply being surmounted by fierce and sinister-looking countenances, garnished with long, tangled beards.

"Good night, strangers," said the foremost, pulling up his horse.

"Good night," returned I, without appearing to divert my attention from the agreeable masticatory process in which I was engaged. I had already taken the measure of these worthies long before they came up, and wished to avoid letting them see with how much apprehension their appearance had inspired us.

"How far is it to Bob Livermore's farm?"

"About a mile."

They were turning their horses' heads to our great contentment, when the spokesman said:—

"You're goin' to the mines, I guess?"

"Yes," said I, "we are bound for the Stanislaus mine."

"Have *you* been there?" inquired Halliday.

"Well, I *ray*ther guess we have."

"What luck had you?"

"Darned little; we made jist enough to pay our way along the road."

"What chance do you think we'll have?"

"Well, I guess you'll have chances enough, but darned few sartainties. Unless you keep your eyes skinned, and sleep without winking, they'll steal the very nose off your face."

"How are they off for provender for the horses?"

"There ain't a blade of grass in the whole darned country. If it warn't that this here tarnal critter of mine managed to live upon acorns and rotten stone, I guess as how he'd a been a gonner some weeks ago. But don't let this scar ye, strangers, for there's mountains of goold if you can only get at it. Good night, my trumps; I wish you luck."

With these agreeable assurances, which seemed to produce their due effect upon Halliday, the spokesman rode off and rejoined his companion.

Travelling rapidly next day, we arrived to-

wards evening at a good encampment, where there was plenty of wood and water; and, on the following day, we found ourselves in the San Joachin valley. We had proceeded a considerable distance on the plain, when we perceived several waggons in advance. They appeared to belong to a numerous party, and were accompanied by a large *cavallard*. They were going at an easy, steady pace, and we entertained hopes of being able soon to overtake them. My companions' eyes beamed with joy at this agreeable sight, for he only desired an opportunity of putting his talents and effrontery to account, in order to render our mode of travelling more easy and comfortable. Pushing on before me, he came up with the party; and, when I overtook them near a small lake surrounded with bulrushes, I found him paying compliments to a dry-looking little Spaniard, who held a couple of dead geese, that he had just killed, slung on the barrel of a fowling-piece which he had on his shoulder. The place being favourable for an encampment, we were glad enough to halt

here for the night with our new acquaintances, the society of human beings being always a treat in these wilds.

Halliday was not long before he had made himself acquainted with the names and circumstances of all the party. The little sportsman, into whose good graces he had wormed himself, was Don Emanuel, of Monterey, a gentleman of property, who was now on a trading expedition to the mines, and having with him a large stock of dried beef, flour, biscuit, sugar, coffee, &c., besides troops of cows and horses. Outside the waggons that contained the former articles, and which were packed to the very top, might be seen tied to the poles crow-bars, picks, wash-bowls of wood and tin, and other implements used in mining. These waggons were accompanied and guarded by four or five Californians, and the same number of Indians; the latter, of course, being employed for the more laborious kinds of work.

We were no less surprised than pleased at finding amongst the party several of our old

acquaintances from Lower California, one of them, Señor Edouard D——, being the father of a dark-eyed *señorita*, who had left some tender *souvenirs* in my unsentimental friend Halliday's heart. Whether it was the memory of these love-passages, or the savoury odour of the wild geese that had been killed on the lake, that attracted the latter from our evening meal, I cannot take upon myself to say; but certain it was, that he left me to munch in solitude my supper of tough biscuit; for I was too much fatigued to cook anything more elaborate. I was resolved, however, to make up a good fire, and accordingly went over to the larger encampment to borrow an axe for the purpose of chopping some wood. I had scarcely, however, set foot within its precincts when I was seized by the leg by one of those huge dogs that generally accompany every party of the natives; and, on crying out for assistance, I was set upon by a number of others, whom I found it difficult enough to keep off, until some of the Spaniards came to my assistance. These dogs,

as I have before observed, are a perfect nuisance; but they are an excellent watch, and are far more trustworthy, as night sentinels, than men tired out by the fatigues of the day.

CHAPTER XV.

The San Joachin—The ford—Exorbitant ferryage—Halliday's ingenious contrivance for crossing—A prairie on fire—The Stanislaus river—Almost lost again—Indian Salmon-fishery—A return party—Tobacco at a premium—The Stanislaus mine.

We now continued our journey with the party of Don Emanuel; a great convenience to us, as, through his kindness, we were enabled to place our horses, with his, under the care of the Indians, who kept a vigilant watch over them at each successive encampment. Our party, however, did not trespass so far upon the Don's as to be confounded with it. We kept so far distinct from it as to build a separate fire and perform our culinary operations for ourselves; but if we wanted an axe, a pan, or a log of wood, our friend's party proved a never-failing resource on such an

emergency, and we considered it a fortunate circumstance that we had overtaken them. We enjoyed the advantages of companionship and protection, heightened by the interchange of those trifling acts of courtesy and kindness which render intercourse with our fellow-beings pleasing, and which, though even trivial in themselves, are appreciated tenfold in such a position as we all stood in, with regard to each other, our projects, our chances, and our difficulties.

The next day we reached the banks of the San Joachin river, into which those tributary streams discharge themselves, that divide the various "diggins" or portions of the country where gold is found in the greatest abundance.

On our right and left we beheld stretching out as far as we could see plains covered with the richest and tallest grass; and it appeared to me, at the time, that this locality, being about the most fertile in California, was the best adapted for settlement; but I have since been informed, that fever and ague prevail

everywhere along the banks of the river to such an extent as to render any attempt to settle here tantamount to deliberate and determined suicide.

I could not contemplate without interest the passage across the stream which so many thousands had already hazarded in their eager pursuit after gold. It was denoted by a small house constructed of toolies or bulrushes, which stood within a few yards of the water, and was just large enough to serve for the residence of the two Yankees who had established themselves here on speculation. There was only one boat on the river, and that one too small to transport more than five men in safety across to the opposite bank, and quite insufficient for us. If we could have succeeded in coming to terms with the ferryman, we should not perhaps have thought of any other means of traversing the stream, but contrived to accommodate ourselves to the circumstances. The charge, however, for the passage of each person, was one dollar; too high for our scanty means. Don Emanuel

endeavoured to strike a bargain for the transport of his waggons and cattle, but the demand was so enormous, that he hesitated and turned about to consult with us what was best to be done to meet the exigencies of the case. After a lengthy consultation, and after the consideration and rejection of numerous plans, Halliday suggested one which was adopted, and measures were instantly set on foot for carrying it into effect.

The Indians of the party were despatched to hunt up the banks of the river for toolies. Of these, they collected as many as were necessary for the purpose, conveying them to the bar of the stream, where we all set to work to tie them up in large bundles of equal size, in as compact a form and as tightly as possible. Some five or six of these bundles being prepared, they were strongly bound together, side by side, by means of a few long pieces of raw hide, so that they assumed the form of a boat or raft. These were next launched upon the water, and some of the planks, taken out of the waggons,

placed on the top; a man furnished with a long pole taking up a convenient position, so as to push the raft across without difficulty. In the course of a couple of hours, the whole of these arrangements were completed, the waggons unladen, and their contents successfully conveyed to the opposite side; greatly to the mortification of the ferrymen.

Those who had horses prepared to ford the stream at the point or bar selected by the Indians as the safest for the mules and cattle. I may state that, even at this point and at low water, the San Joachin is extremely dangerous; and that, when it is at the shallowest—as it was at this time—a false step may precipitate the traveller and his steed into deep and rapid water, leaving him no resource save that of swimming for his life.

I lent Halliday my horse, which stood a span or two higher than his own, and he proceeded to ride across, but had scarcely got half way over, having kept pretty well on the

bar, when the animal sank into the water, and he was compelled to return. I contented myself with being less adventurous, and humbly followed close in the track of the mules and the Indians, getting over in perfect safety and not much wetted; although my horse shivered exceedingly, the cold being so severe. Halliday came over the same way, and there remained but the waggons and the cattle. The former were drawn along the bar with extreme difficulty, and the latter also gave much trouble, notwithstanding the assistance of the most experienced horsemen of the party. Some of them, having got partly over, turned tail and scampered back; others persisted in floating down the stream; some remained stationary, shivering in the water, and all were averse to encounter the cold; nor did we succeed in getting them across at last, but at a great expense of time and labour. As it was, one of the cows got into deep water, and was drowned, the carcase floating down until its further descent was happily arrested by a projecting portion

of the embankment, at which point it was recovered by our toolie raft, and eventually served us for a repast. The excitement of this scene was extraordinary; and the peaceful echoes of the neighbourhood had never, I venture to say, been disturbed before by such shouting, and screaming, and swearing. At length we all sate down, thoroughly fatigued; and, having selected a fitting spot, determined to rest there until the morrow.

The San Joachin is a beautiful stream, extremely rapid, and, at times, rising to an extraordinary height, although its waters were now shallow. Its breadth averages fifty feet, and its banks are overshadowed with stately trees and a variety of plants and shrubs; the river itself abounding with fish, particularly a kind of salmon, on which, in many places, the natives almost entirely subsist.

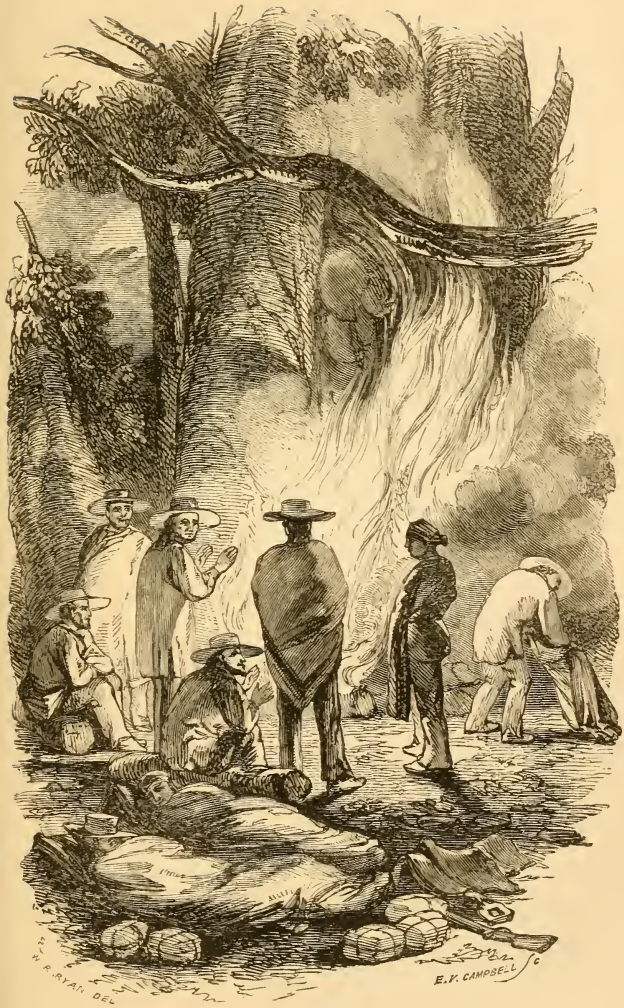
On the side where we now were the bush and brushwood grew luxuriantly; and in several secluded and shady spots we discovered a great many Indians, half clad, half starved, and very dirty, stretched upon the

ground half asleep. We felt suspicious of their honesty, and, being resolved not to put it to the test, kept a sharp look-out all night, and sustained no loss.

We started off again early next morning, and, in the course of that day's march, came upon a large prairie fire, which burned with extraordinary rapidity and fierceness, menacing soon to stop our progress. Fortunately, our road was quite bare of grass; and, owing to this circumstance, the flames could not spread across it.

This was the first time I had ever witnessed such a spectacle, and certainly it was wonderfully grand and appalling. The flames devoured every blade of grass in their way, roaring, and crackling, and leaping from side to side according to the varying direction of every fitful gust that blew, the smoke ascending in dense volumes, and forming quite a cloud above the scene of the terrific devastation.

Fires of this kind, amongst the long grass and wild oats, are not unfrequent in Cali-



ON THE ROAD TO THE MINES—BURNING TREES FOR A CAMP-FIRE.

fornia; and, in the midst of the summer, when the vegetation is parched by the broiling sun, they often burn furiously during many days, only subsiding when they have exhausted all aliment.

We passed the fire, and soon reached the Stanislaus river, which takes its rise near the Californian range of mountains, and discharges itself into the San Joachin, than which it is not less beautifully wooded, nor its banks less picturesque. We were on its north side, and anxiously looked about us for some means of conveying ourselves, our waggons, and our cattle across.

This proved no easy matter; and we travelled many wearisome miles, without any regular road, and where the briars and bushes offered innumerable obstructions to the progress of the waggons and mules, adding to the natural difficulties of the ground, which was very uneven, and bestrewed with broken limbs of trees.

Halliday had requested me to take charge of his horse, whilst he assisted Don Emanuel

along the road. This I willingly did; and, perceiving shortly afterwards a convenient descent to the brink of the river, where I could afford it and the one I rode an opportunity of slaking their thirst, I led them down and allowed them to drink until they appeared satisfied. On clambering up the bank of the river again, I found no traces of my companions; but, judging that they would continue along the water-side, I pursued my way for a couple of miles, until I came to a spot where the water was very shallow, offering, through an opening in the banks on both sides, a convenient passage for a waggon. Here then I paused awhile, then dashed over, and, ascending the opposite path, soon found myself entering on a vast plain, on which there were no signs of my party visible. Nevertheless, I pursued the indistinct path before me, until it altogether disappeared, when I thought it prudent to retrace my steps to the spot from which I had first started on the opposite side, supposing that my friends might have discovered a yet more convenient

crossing-place. I galloped forward along the bank, until I came to the ledge of a precipice overlooking the river, and which seemed to continue for several miles straight onwards; but, as I perceived no track of travellers, nor any sign of another ford, I made up my mind to recross the river for the last time, and, risking consequences, to pursue the track I had discovered. This I accordingly did, travelling onwards in much perplexity and anxiety of mind, until I fell in with the remains of an encampment, where several logs were yet burning, and where, had the hour been more advanced, I should certainly have taken up my lodging for the night. The party must have been a large one, for the ground was well trodden down; but I felt certain it could not be mine, as the embers indicated that the halt had taken place the evening before; still, I rejoiced at the discovery, as it led me to hope I was not far out of the track. I determined therefore to proceed, but, before doing so, retraced my steps for about half a mile, when I heard a man shouting; and, looking

in the direction of the sound across the plain, I recognised Halliday and several Californians bringing up the mules.

The mystery was soon solved. On crossing the river, the Indians and waggons had been sent on, the thick wheels of the latter making no impression upon the hard surface of the road, which sufficiently accounted for my not finding their track: the remainder of the party had turned away in another direction, for the purpose of obtaining fish at a *ranchérie* about two miles distant, where a regular salmon fishery has been established by the Indians. Opposite the place where the huts are stationed, the natives have formed an artificial bar, which, by obstructing the progress of the fish, enables the fishermen to catch them in great abundance, and with much facility.

I learned that the Indians manifested the greatest desire to procure flour and bread in exchange for their fish, which they do not hold in much estimation, as it forms the staple of their food. They were also anxious

to trade for clothing, being but very poorly supplied with apparel. Their huts are constructed principally of the branches of trees, most ingeniously intertwined; and, for a people unacquainted with the arts of civilization, some of their domestic articles exhibit wonderful evidences of native skill and workmanship, both as regards the fashioning and the ornamenting. Two bowls which Halliday brought away were exquisitely wrought, and excited much admiration. These Indians possess no knowledge of any language save their own, though we found a few who were sufficiently acquainted with Spanish to transact business to the limited extent of their requirements.

Our road from this halting-place became every day more rugged and dreary. The further we advanced, the scarcer was the herbage, the oats and grass having been burned up by the Indians; so that the face of the entire country appeared black and gloomy in the extreme. Water, too, was to be found only at rare intervals, nor did convenient spots

for an encampment abound, and we were often compelled to lie out under the cover of a small bush. Every now and then we came up with trees, around whose huge trunks heaps of acorns lay strewed, which the Indians of our party roasted in the ashes and ate. I did not find the flavour of them at all disagreeable, and made up my mind not to die of starvation as long as I could find any.

One night we suddenly fell in with a large party of Americans and Spaniards, encamped for the night, and who were on their way from the mines. Amongst them was Doctor Ord, brother to Lieutenant Ord, of the regular army. He had rendered himself notorious at the "diggins," by his exorbitant charges for medicine and medical advice, by which he had succeeded in realizing an immense sum of money. The circumstance was freely spoken of, but the doctor's gold rendered him opinion-proof.

In the course of the evening, one of the Americans of the party came to where Halliday and I had built up our fire, and, bidding us a good evening, seated himself on a log of wood

opposite to us. He was a weather-beaten man, with hard features, harder hands, and of a most serious cast of countenance. His dress denoted exposure to severe service and rude conflict with the elements, as well as with the bushes and brambles of the route. His coat was made of leather, but torn, and hanging in shreds, whilst his feet were encased in an enormous pair of boots, which seemed to have been made expressly for wading through swamps, for which they were far better adapted than for the high and dry and difficult lands of this region.

"I presume," said I, after we had exchanged sundry civilities, "that you have made your fortune at the mines, and are returning home to enjoy it."

"Well, now, I guess I can enlighten you a little about them diggins, if you aire going there, young man, as I reckon you aire," replied the stranger; "but I suppose you won't mind doing me a small favour first."

"Not at all," I answered; "anything we have you are welcome to. What is it?"

"Why, it's just this here. I want to buy a shillin's worth of tobacco; and if you'll sell it me, or swop for it, I'll be etarnally obliged to you."

"I thought it was something more important and valuable," said I—but here he interrupted me.

"Important and valuable! Darn it all! I should like to know what's more important and valuable than a good chaw on a road like this here, when you can't get 'baccy no how. If you haven't got it, or have, and won't part with it, say so, and I'll go about my business."

"I am sorry," answered I, gravely, for his earnestness amounted almost to warmth, "that I cannot oblige you. Had I any, you should be welcome to it without payment, but I do not possess a shred."

The Yankee arose from his log, and turned away in silence, with an expression of disappointment on his countenance that I shall not readily forget. It was manifest that he was suffering extremely for the want of the herb, and if I had only preserved my stock of cigars,

I might—as I subsequently ascertained—have realized a handsome sum for the lot, as tobacco fetched enormous prices.

About half an hour after, another of the party came over to us. We only required to hear the faint tones of his voice, to conclude that he had been at the point of death. He readily entered into conversation, and informed us that he had passed the summer at the mines, where the excessive heat during the day, and the dampness of the ground where the gold-washing is performed, together with privation and fatigue, had brought on fever and ague, which nearly proved fatal to him. He had frequently given an ounce of gold for the visit of a medical man, and on several occasions paid two and even three ounces for a single dose of medicine. He showed us a pair of thin peg-shoes, nearly worn out, for which he had paid twenty-four dollars. In fact, he said, the speculators derived more advantage from trading than the miners did from digging, as the produce of a day's toil would often be sacrificed for some simple necessary. How-

ever, he had made a large sum of money, and, under the care of some of his party, gradually became convalescent. He told us that a great many robberies had been committed at the mines, and in their neighbourhood; but that, generally speaking, the miners respected one another's rights, and afforded new comers every assistance in their power. He inquired of us if the road to Pueblo was safe, and appeared highly gratified to learn that no danger existed from robbers, who would not venture to attack a large party.

Our journey next day was extremely difficult, owing to the irregularities and obstructions of the road. The country, too, became gloomy to the last degree, and did not tend to elevate my spirits or those of Halliday. The hills around us were of rock, slate, gravel, and sand, without a particle of vegetation, and the intervening valleys yawned like so many immense graves, into which we were voluntarily about to plunge. The cattle toiled desperately, and but for the Indians, who laboured unweariedly also, they would never have got

over the ground. At length, however, after some few days' journeying through this inhospitable region, during which time Halliday and I lived upon acorns, in order to husband our scanty stock of provisions, we emerged upon a sandy steep, that led directly into the Stanislaus mine, our present destination.

CHAPTER XVI.

Geographical features of the country—Alta-California—The Great Basin—The Timponogos, Yutah, and Pyramid Lakes—The Emigrant Pass—The California, Colorado, and Coast Ranges—The San Joachin Valley and River—Geological structure of the different ranges—Original sources of the precious metals—Composition of Californian gold.

Before I conduct my readers to the mines, it becomes necessary for me to lay before them a brief account of the general appearance of the country, as far as relates to its physical, geographical, and geological features. In doing so, I shall endeavour to avoid entering more deeply into the technicalities of the subject than is consistent with the character of my narrative; for it would be somewhat out of place to introduce here abstruse geological disquisitions as to the origin and formation of the different rocks, many of them involving questions still "*sub judice.*"

The range of territory comprehended under the general name of California, situated in the western part of North America, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and forming till lately the north-western portion of the United States of Mexico, consists of two parts—the narrow peninsula of Old California, divided from the main land by the Gulf of California, and extending from Cape St. Lucas to about 32° N. latitude; and New, or Upper California, ceded to the United States by a recent treaty, comprising the whole country from 32° to 42½° N. latitude, where it borders on the Oregon territory. Upper California contains about 400,000 square miles, divided into three distinct regions; first, that part lying east of the Colorado river, comprising about three-tenths of the whole; secondly, the portion occupying the centre, lying between the Colorado and the Californian range of mountains, nearly triangular in form, comprising four-tenths, or about 160,000 square miles. The remaining three-tenths is that portion to which the attention of the whole world has been directed by the

discovery of immense quantities of the precious metals within its limits; its area is about 120,000 square miles. The part which lies to the east of the Colorado is separated by the Anahuhu range from New Mexico; being bounded on the west by the Colorado; on the north by the Bear mountains, which divide it from Oregon; and on the south by the Gila. The only account as yet received of the centre of this portion is that derived from a few travellers and the trappers of Santa Fé, who describe it as being covered with broken mountain ranges, with small and confined valleys, boasting of but little arable land.

If we are to form our conclusions from the different statements that have reached us from these sources, it would seem that this section is wholly unfit for the purposes of occupation or settlement, being composed of elevated and barren table-lands, destitute of water, and presenting, by way of vegetation, only the wild sage and squash. The few ponds of water that are to be met with are in general salt; and even the waters of the Colorado are said

to be of a brackish or slimy taste. A few feeble streams flow in different directions from the great mountains which, in many places, traverse this region. These streams are separated sometimes by plains, and sometimes by mountains, without water and without vegetation, and may be called deserts, as they contribute nothing towards the maintenance of animal life.

In regard to the central portion, its general features are those of a semi-desert; its northern portion forming a "Great Basin," the extent of which is now ascertained to be 400 miles from east to west, by 250 miles from north to south; it is bounded on the south by a range of mountains, between the parallels of 37° and 38° N., extending from the Californian to the Wahsatch range. From this range streams flow north and south; the former lose themselves in the dreary waste, the latter unite with the waters of the Colorado. The country lying to the south of it is imperfectly known; but it is believed to resemble the southern part of the first section.

The northern part, or "Great Basin," is elevated some four or five thousand feet above the level of the sea, having a succession of isolated mountain ranges, some of which rise to the height of six or seven thousand feet above the plains, their general outline being sharp and rugged. The mountains run north and south; the streams which flow within the basin run east and west, emptying into the lakes, or losing themselves in sandy plains. The small rivulets that have their sources in the mountains, which are capped with snow, afford water and some grass, for the most part of the year, but their running waters rarely extend beyond the alluvial deposits at the bases.

The plains of the Great Basin are represented as appalling and unearthly in their appearance, not only to the traveller, but to all the brute creation, who rarely venture upon them. Mr. Bryant, who crossed the Great Salt Plain, describes it as having "a snow-like surface, and it is so compact and hard on its eastern border as to show but little impression

from the feet of animals passing over it. This snow-white substance is an encrustation of saline and alkaline bodies, combined in thickness from one fourth to half an inch, beneath which is a stratum of damp, whitish sand and clay, intermingled; small fragments of white, shelly rock are strewn over the entire plain, and imbedded in the salt and sand. To the west, the soil of the plain becomes softer—a composition of clay, sand, and salt, in which the mules are represented as sinking to their knees; and at times the travelling becomes so difficult and fatiguing to the animals as almost to prevent their advancing. It is about 40 miles in breadth, and 150 miles in length."

Within the area of this basin lie the Timponogos, or Great Salt and the Yutah Lakes, which stretch off to the east, and on the west are situated the Pyramid, Walker, and Carson Lakes, with a number of smaller ones.

The Great Salt Lake is said to be about 70 miles in length, and 40 to 60 miles in width. Its surface is dotted with numerous islands, and there are several large bays on its

shores. The water is brackish and offensive to the taste, and the constituent parts of the salt obtained by evaporation are, according to Colonel Fremont, as follows: — Chloride of sodium, 97·80; chloride of calcium, 0·61; chloride of magnesium, 0·24; sulphate of soda, 0·23; sulphate of lime, 1·12.

The soil along its shores is in places argillaceous, in others sandy and gravelly; where there is soil, grass, canes, rushes, and a variety of small shrubs and flowering plants grow luxuriantly. On the mountain sides there are a few scrub oaks and stunted cedars, and these are also found on the borders of the small streams which flow from the mountains. The water of these streams is very pure and cold. The Bear River and several other considerable streams empty into the Great Salt Lake from the north and east.

Along the eastern bank of the Yutah Lake, and on both sides of the Yutah River, there is much land fit for tillage and pasture. On a part of this, a settlement was made by the Mormons in 1847. Mary's River pursues a

serpentine course towards the south-west for about 300 miles, and is then lost in a lake, or slough. It is about 30 or 40 feet in width, with steep, perpendicular banks, at times deep, at others nearly dry, from having been absorbed by the earth, and is frequently seen only as a line of stagnant pools. The water of the river, towards its termination, is not drinkable, but as acrid and bitter as the strongest ley. The sink of Mary's River consists of pools of stagnant water covered with a yellowish slime, and emitting a disagreeable odour, which at times have the appearance of a lake some twenty miles in length by six in breadth, according to the season of the year. The usual alluvial deposit is to be found around this sheet of water, and is covered with short grass or reeds.

Fifty miles westward of the "Sink," and at the base of the Californian range, lies the Pyramid Lake; and here the eye is again refreshed with the sight of trees. As the mountains are approached, the volcanic appearances increase, the plains are covered with scoriæ,

and the mountain ridges are composed of black, basaltic rocks. Numerous warm springs, impregnated with salt, sulphur, and magnesia, are every where to be met with in the latter. The Truckee, or Salmon-trout river, which falls into this lake, and offers a good pass through the mountains at this place, is said to be one hundred miles in length; taking its rise in the mountains, and flowing through a finely timbered country, which changes into the barren and rocky region above described, as it approaches the lake. It is seldom more than fifty feet wide, and about two feet deep; the current is rapid, and the water clear; grass in abundance can be obtained along its banks, at the season when the mountain passes are practicable.

The ascent of the Californian mountains begins at the Pyramid Lake: reddish and brown sandstone are first met with, then conglomerates, granites, and basalts. The distance to the summit is sixty-five miles, and the higher ridges are covered with a thick growth of timber, principally coniferæ. Colonel Fre-

mont estimates the pass to be about 7,200 feet above the level of the sea.

The descent, on the west, is down the Bear Creek, a small tributary of the Feather River; and the Valley of the Sacramento is reached without difficulty, forty miles north of New Helvetia. The pass is the one generally travelled by emigrants, and should never be attempted after the middle of October. The sufferings endured by emigrants to California, in 1846, ought to prove a salutary caution to those desirous of taking this route late in the season. The time requisite to cross the Great Basin and go through the Emigrant Pass, with waggons, is forty-five days, of which thirty-five are required to reach the foot of the mountains, or Pyramid Lake.

The Californian range of mountains extends from the 42nd to the 35th degree of North latitude, running nearly parallel to the coast, at the distance of 130 to 150 miles from it, where they join the coast range, and, under the name of the Cordilleras of California, extend to Cape San Lucas, the extreme point of

the peninsula: these latter mountains, with their spurs, occupying the narrow belt of sea-coast west of the Colorado River.

The Colorado range rises gradually from the valley, at first in gentle, undulating hills, becoming more precipitous as they ascend, but still not so much so as to prevent access to the highest points beneath the snow line. The distance from the valley to the summit is from sixty-five to seventy miles, and the average altitude 8000 feet. The ascent gives rise to a variety of climates, each producing its flowers and vegetation.

The coast range is a collection of rugged mountains, resembling spurs, their direction being generally parallel to the coast. In their whole extent, from latitude 42° N. to the Bay of San Francisco, they offer few places of settlement. They rise to the height of 4000 feet, and, towards their northern termination, where they join the Shasti mountains, reach the snow line. On the eastern side, this range declines into rolling hills; while on the coast, or western side, they pre-

sent a perpendicular or rocky-bound shore, thus reversing the order of the Californian range.

In both these mountain ranges there are small lakes, lying embosomed in valleys of considerable extent, which afford a plentiful supply of water, and some of the most fertile lands in California are to be found bordering them: the hills throughout the whole range are well timbered, and when trees do not exist, grass and oats grow in great profusion. The climate in these valleys is moist, and well adapted for cultivation, particularly those parts sheltered from the chilling north-west winds of summer.

Speaking of the intervening space between the Sierra Nevada and the coast range, Colonel Fremont, in his late memoir, addressed to the Congress of the United States, says—

"North and south, this region embraces about 10° of latitude—from the peninsula of California to the Oregon. From east to west it extends from the Sierra Nevada to the sea; averaging, in the middle parts, 150 miles; in

the northern parts, 200; giving an area of above 100,000 square miles. Looking westward, from the summit of the Sierra, the main feature presented is the long, low, broad valley of the Joachin and Sacramento rivers; the two valleys forming, in fact, one which is 500 miles long and 50 broad, lying along the base of the Sierra, and bounded to the west by the low coast range of mountains which separates it from the sea. Long, dark lines of timber indicate the streams, and bright spots mark the intervening plains. Lateral ranges, parallel to the Sierra Nevada and the coast, complete the structure of the country, and break it into a surface of valleys and mountains—the valleys a few hundred, and the mountains two to four thousand feet above the sea. These form greater masses, and become more elevated in the north, where some peaks, as the Shasti, enter the regions of perpetual snow. Stretched along the mild coast of the Pacific, with a general elevation in its plains and valleys of only a few hundred feet above the level of the sea, and backed by the

long and lofty wall of the Sierra, mildness and geniality may be assumed as the characteristics of its climate. The inhabitant of corresponding latitudes, on the Atlantic side of the continent, can with difficulty imagine the soft air and southern productions under the same latitudes, in the maritime region of Upper California. The singular beauty and purity of the sky, in the south of this region, is characterized by Humboldt as a rare phenomenon, and all travellers realize the truth of this description.

"These two valleys of the Sacramento and San Joachin are discriminated only by the names of the rivers which traverse them. The Valley of the San Joachin is about 300 miles long and 60 broad, between the slopes of the coast mountain and the Sierra Nevada, with a general elevation of only a few hundred feet above the level of the sea. It presents a variety of soil, from dry and unproductive to well watered and luxuriantly fertile. The eastern (which is the fertile side of the valley) is intersected with numerous streams, forming large

and very beautiful bottoms of fertile land, wooded principally with white oaks, in open groves of handsome trees, often five or six feet in diameter, and 60 to 80 feet high. The larger streams, which are 50 to 150 yards wide, and drain the upper parts of the mountains, pass entirely across the valley, forming the Tule Lakes and the San Jochin River, which, in the rainy season, makes a continuous stream from the head of the valley to the bay. The foot-hills of the Sierra Nevada which limit the valley make a woodland country, diversified with undulating grounds and pretty valleys, and watered with numerous small streams, which reach only a few miles beyond the hills, the springs which supply them not being copious enough to carry them across the plains. These afford many advantageous spots for farms, making sometimes large bottoms of rich, moist land. The rolling surface of the hills presents sunny exposures, sheltered from the winds; and, having a highly favourable climate and suitable soil, are considered to be well adapted to the cultivation of the grape,

and will probably become the principal vine-growing region of California. The uplands bordering the valleys of the large streams are usually wooded with evergreen oaks, and the intervening plains are timbered with groves or belts of evergreen and white oaks, among prairie and open land. The surface of the valley consists of level plains along the Tule Lakes and San Joachin River, changing into undulating and rolling ground nearer the foot-hills of the mountains.

"The northern half of the valley of Upper California is watered by the Sacramento, which runs down south into the Bay of San Francisco, while the San Joachin comes into it from the Southern extremity, flowing north-wards, and meeting the Sacramento in the bay, which is nearly in the middle of the valley."

It is in this northern part of the valley that the gold has hitherto been found.

"The Valley of the Sacramento is divided into an upper and lower part, the lower being 200 miles long, the upper about 100. The latter is not merely entitled to the distinction

of upper, as being higher up on the river, but also as having a superior elevation of some thousands of feet above it. The division is strongly and geographically marked. The Shasti peak stands at the head of the lower valley, in the forks of the river, rising from a base of about 1000 feet, out of a forest of heavy timber. It ascends, like an immense column, upwards of 14,000 feet, (nearly the height of Mont Blanc) the summit glistening with snow, and visible, from favourable points of view, at a distance of 140 miles down the valley. The river here, in descending from the upper valley, plunges down through a *canon*, falling 2000 feet in 20 miles. The upper valley tends to the north-east. It is 100 miles long, and heavily timbered; and the climate and productions are modified by its altitude, its more northern position, and the proximity and elevation of the neighbouring mountains, covered with snow. It contains valleys of arable land, and is deemed capable of settlement.

"Upper California partakes more of the

characteristics of a cold than a warm climate. The rainy season is from November to February. The rain is abundant in the northern districts, but decreases in quantity farther south; and at San Diego, the southernmost of the missions, probably no rain at all falls, as in the north of Lower California. The winter is much milder than in the same latitude on the east coast of America, for it does not appear that the Tule Lakes are ever covered with ice, nor is frost frequent in the valleys, though the surrounding heights are covered with snow for a few months. The summer is very dry, no rain falling then, except at Monterey, where there are sometimes, but rarely, slight showers. The heat is great, and the thermometer probably rises to 80° and more; but exact observations are wanting. On the banks of the Rio Colorado, at the extremity of the sandy desert, Dr. Coulter observed the thermometer rise to 140° in the open air."

Having thus given from the most authentic sources a brief account of the most striking

geographical features of Upper California, I shall now quote from the same authorities a *resumé* of the different opinions published respecting the geological character of the Californian and other mountain ranges, especially such as contain, or are supposed to contain, the precious metals.

It is a matter of importance to know, that wherever gold is found in superficial alluvial strata, as it is in California, it belonged originally to those mountains, whence the river, along whose banks the metal is found, has its source. Such is the case in Virginia, in Georgia, and Carolina; and in some places the course of the river has been traced back, till the vein itself has been reached, and, as the perforations were made, the gold was found in the veins below. Over the plains where such run, the soil of its banks or shores will be enriched with particles of gold or sand, brought down by the running water. In the decomposition of the rocks forming the lofty peaks of Paraguay, in South America, masses of gold have been precipitated, weighing from

one to fifty pounds; and other mines have furnished masses weighing from twenty-eight to one hundred pounds. Generally speaking, where mountain ranges cut or cross each other, showing that there the greatest upheavings and disturbances have occurred, the precious metals are usually found in the purest and most abundant state. Now, several other substances are found in these situations, having, to the inexperienced eye, much the appearance of the metal in question, but which are utterly valueless. These can be easily recognised by very simple tests. The sulphuret of iron, or iron pyrites, for instance, is a substance which much resembles gold in colour, but differs from it in the following ways: gold can be cut with a knife, like lead or zinc; the sulphuret of iron cannot; it resists all attempts of the kind, and will crumble instead of cutting. Secondly, if the substance be struck with steel, and fire is produced, it is pyrites—such an effect will not follow if it were gold. Again, if a small piece of the mineral be placed upon a wire, over a candle,

a sulphurous exhalation will be produced, if it be sulphuret of iron; but, if gold, this will not be the case.

Gold again is much heavier than any other similar substance. The specific gravity of Californian gold is 15·96, nearly sixteen times heavier than water.

A drop of nitric acid placed upon gold will have no effect upon it; while, if the same agent be applied to baser metals, it will have the effect of changing their colour, and blackening their surface. It appears that the gold was first detected on the American Fork, about forty miles above Sutter's Fort, (now called New Helvetia) and 1,500 or 2,000 feet above the level of the sea. The distance of the lower washing is twenty-five miles. The hills in which the diggings are made are composed of a clayey and slaty formation, overgrown with very large trees, mostly the *Pinus Lambertiani*. From the convenience of sawing the trees, the mill was erected that led to the discovery of the precious metal. These hills form the first rise of the California

Range, and extend about twelve miles east. Other positions where gold has been found lead to the belief that the same formation continues about the same height, to the Feather river on the north, a distance of 150 miles, and covering an area of about 1,800 square miles, throughout which gold has been already discovered; and thence, if geological facts are to be taken as a basis, extends further north.

The gold is found in its virgin state, disseminated in small particles, of different sizes and different forms. Sometimes the small pieces are without any particular shape, sometimes they resemble small leaves, sometimes twigs; and sometimes the metal is found in masses. It is found in three distinct deposits: 1, in sand and gravel-beds; 2, among decomposed granite; 3, intermixed with talcose slate. These rocks, in their original state, are hard, massive, and solid, but have now become soft and friable. This change has occurred from the long continued action of the weather and the atmosphere upon

them. Some of the different ingredients that enter into the composition of the granite, or diorite rocks, are more easily decomposed than the others; this causes a vacant space or chink to be formed in the rock, which then receives the rain or melted snow. When the temperature lowers so much as to freeze the water lodged in these cavities, from the ice occupying more space than the water did, it acts as so many wedges of great power, which split off masses of the rock, that fall down into the river below. These masses, often containing gold in greater or lesser quantity, are carried down with the stream, undergoing friction in their passage, and at last becoming ground into gravel or sand, according to the rapidity of the stream, the distance they have been carried, and the impediments they have met with in their transit. The largest pieces are found near and in the talcose slate rocks, but the finer particles and scales have been carried down by the streams to the lowest part of the valleys, where they are mixed with sand on

the surface, and to the depth of from four or five feet.

The composition of Californian gold, according to the best analysis, is—

Gold	88·75
Silver	8·88
Copper	85
Siliceous residue . .	1·40
Loss	12
	100

"From the character of the deposit in which the gold is at present discovered, and the fact that the streams are quite clear, and do not carry alluvial with them," says a clever writer, "we may conclude that they are of ancient date, and that the disintegrating process is not going on rapidly. The specimens of gold obtained up to the present time confirm this theory, for they all exhibit a fused appearance; some have pebbles of quartz embedded in them, and some are amalgamated. These latter are about the size of duck-shot, proving incontestably the pre-

sence of liquid mercury in the deposit, occasioned, no doubt, by the reduction of its ore by heat; which fact alone would point back to a period when this range was undergoing volcanic action."

APPENDIX.

LOWER CALIFORNIA.

The following description of Lower California, from the pen of Mr. Farnham, conveys so completely to the mind the general impression made by its first aspect on a stranger, and gives, besides, so correct an estimate of its resources and capabilities, that I cannot resist the temptation to transfer it to my pages :—

"From the highlands near the mouth of the Rio Colorado, where it forms a junction with the Gulf of California, a wild and somewhat interesting scene opens. In the east appears a line of mountains of a dark hue, stretching down the coast of the Gulf as far as the eye can reach. These heights are generally destitute of trees; but timber grows in some of the ravines. The general aspect, however, is far from pleasing. There is such a vastness of monotonous desolation; so dry, so blistered with volcanic fires; so forbidding to the wants of thirsting and hungering men; that one gladly turns his eye upon the water, the *Mar de Cortez*, the Gulf of California. The Colorado, two and a half miles in width, rushes into this Gulf with great force, lashing as it goes the small islands lying at its mouth, and

for many leagues around the waters of the Gulf are discoloured by its turbulent flood. On the west sweep away the mountains of Lower California. These also are a thirsty mass of burned rocks, so dry that vegetation finds no resting-place among them. But they lift themselves nobly to the clouds, and look so venerable in their baldness, that one feels an ill-defined but absorbing interest in viewing them. Man never treads their treeless heights—he finds among them neither food nor drink: nor will they ever resound with the voices and tumults of human life. Still, is there not in a wilderness of barren mountains a vast idea of chilling unchangeableness, which inspires a feeling of awe and reverence? The poor Indians thought so. They peopled them with gods, and trembled when the moon lighted them dimly at night, and when the elements groaned among them. They stand a vast assemblage of red and brown earth, extending in a bold jagged line broader and higher, onward and upward, till they fade away among the bright clouds and dewless skies of Lower California: that field of trial for men who would plant in the heart of the Indian the seeds of a holy life; the scenes of the labours, hopes, and sufferings, of Padres Salva Tierra and Ugarte; the burning-place of Padres Corando's and Tamaral's martyrdom! We will describe that country as it now exists.

"The province of Lower California extends from Cape San Lucas to the Bay of Todos Santos, and varies from thirty to one hundred and fifty miles in width, a superficial extent almost equal to that of Great Britain; and yet, on account of its barrenness, never will, from the products of the soil, maintain five hundred thousand people in a

state of comfort ordinarily found in the civilized condition. This statement may seem surprising to those who are acquainted with the geological fact that, though it is a volcanic country, the lava and other volcanic matter is decomposing at the usual rate. But surprise will cease when such persons are informed that every few years tornadoes sweep over the country with such violence, and bearing with them such floods of rain, that whatever of soil has been in any manner previously formed, is swept into the sea. So that even those little nooks among the mountains, where the inhabitants from time to time make their fields, and task the vexed earth for a scanty subsistence, are liable to be laid bare by the torrents. In case the soil chance to be lodged in some other dell, before it reach the Ocean or the Gulf, and the people follow it to its new location, they find perhaps no water there, and cannot cultivate it. Consequently, they are often driven by dreadful want to some other point in quest of sustenance, where they may not find it, and perish among the parched highlands. For the space of twenty or thirty leagues from the Cape San Lucas, the air is rendered mild and kindly by the sea-breezes, and the ground in many parts being wet by little currents of water running from the highlands, is very fruitful. From this section to Loretto, latitude 26° 16′ N., the heat is excessive, the soil dry and barren, and the surface of the country extremely craggy and forbidding. From Loretto northward to Todos Santos, the air is more temperate, the water in the mountains sometimes freezes, and the soil is not so rugged and full of rocks, but is barren and desolate as that around Loretto. The mean range of temperature in the whole country, in the summer

season, is from 60° to 74° Fahrenheit. The rains fall in the winter months, are very severe, and of short duration. During the remainder of the year the air is dry and clear, and the sky more beautiful than the imagination can conceive.

"The range of mountains occupying the whole interior of this country vary in height from one to five thousand feet above the level of the sea. They are almost bare of all verdure, mere brown piles of barrenness, sprinkled, here and there, with a cluster of briars, small shrubs, or dwarf trees. Among the ridges are a few spots to which the sweeping rains have spared a little soil. These, if watered by springs or streams, are beautiful and productive. There are also a few places near the coast which are well adapted to tillage and pasturage.

"But the principal difficulty with this region is one common to all countries of volcanic origin—a scarcity of water. The porousness of the rocks allows it to pass under ground to the sea. Consequently, one finds few streams and springs in Lower California. From the Cape San Lucas to the mouth of the Colorado, six hundred miles, there are only two streams emptying into the Gulf. One of these is called San Josef del Cabo: it passes through the plantations of the Mission bearing the same name, and discharges itself into the bay of San Barnabas. The other is the Mulege, which waters the Mission of Santa Rosalia, and enters the Gulf in latitude 27° N. These are not navigable. The streams on the ocean coast, also, are few and small. Some of them are large enough to propel light machinery, or irrigate considerable tracts of land, but none of them are navigable. In the interior are several large springs, which

send out abundant currents along the rocky beds of their upper courses; but, when they reach the loose sands and porous rocks of the lower country, they sink, and enter the sea through subterranean channels. A great misfortune it is, too, that the lands which border those portions of these streams which run above the ground consist of barren rocks. Where springs, however, and arable land occur together, immense fertility is the consequence. There is some variety of climate on the coasts which it may be well to mention On the Pacific shore, the temperature is rendered delightfully balmy by the sea-breezes, and the humidity which they bring along with them. Fahrenheit's thermometer ranges on this coast, during the summer, between fifty-eight and seventy-one degrees. In the winter months, while the rains are falling, it sinks as low as fifty degrees above zero. On the Gulf coast, there is a still greater variation. While at the Cape the mercury stands between sixty and seventy degrees, near the head of the Gulf it is down to the freezing point.

"These isolated facts, in regard to the great territory under consideration, will give the reader as perfect an idea of the surface and agricultural capabilities of Lower California as will be here needed.

"The few fertile spots in Lower California were occupied at an early day, and planted with maize, wheat, beans, peas, and all manner of esculent roots.

"The European vine was also introduced extensively, and yielded grapes of the finest quality. From these grapes wines were made, which were equal in excellence to those of the Canary Islands. The orange, lemon, lime, citron, prune, plantain,

pine-apple, and other tropical fruits, were also planted, and yielded abundant crops. These articles are still cultivated by the present inhabitants. They also rear, as of old, horses, black cattle, mules, goats, and a few hogs. But the gross amount of all these products, in a country where there is so little fruitful land, is very small; and, in fact, the people, though not numerous, are unable, on those barren shores, to supply themselves at all times with the necessaries of life.

"But there is, in the construction of the Universe, a great compensatory law, which, when one blessing is withheld, grants another in its stead. So here, while the land is desolate, the sea is stored with an incredible abundance and variety of fish. Only a few of them can be named: the halibut, salmon, turbot, skate, pilchard, large oyster, thornback, mackerel, barbel, bonitos, soles, lobsters, crabs, sardines, cod, tunnies, anchovies, and pearl-oysters. These fish are all of the finest quality, and exceedingly numerous. In a word, the waters of Lower California are so rich, that, although the land be dreary, and, for the most part, a leafless waste, the country would be a valuable acquisition to any commercial nation. The value of the pearl-oyster alone would authorise us to make this remark. There are immense beds of these in the Gulf. These pearls of Lower California are considered of excellent water; but their rather irregular figure somewhat reduces their value. The manner of obtaining these pearls is not without interest. The vessels employed in the fisheries are from fifteen to thirty tons burden. They are usually fitted out by private individuals. The Armador, or owner, commands them. Crews are shipped to work them,

and from forty to fifty Indians, called Busos, to dive for the oyster. A stock of provisions and spirits, a small sum of money to advance the people during the cruise, a limited supply of calaboose furniture, a sufficient number of hammocks to sleep in, and a quantity of ballast, constitute nearly all the cargo outward bound. Thus arranged, they sail into the Gulf; and having arrived at the oyster banks, cast anchor and commence business. The divers are first called to duty. They plunge to the bottom in four or five fathom water, dig up with sharpened sticks as many oysters as they are able, rise to the surface, and deposit them in sacks hung to receive them at the vessel's side. And thus they continue to do until the sacks are filled, or the hours allotted to this part of the labour are ended. When the diving of the day is done, all come on board and place themselves in a circle around the Armador, who divides what they have obtained, in the following manner: two oysters for himself, the same number for the Busos, or divers, and one for the government.

"This division having been concluded, they next proceed, without moving from their places, to open the oysters which have fallen to the lot of the Armador. During this operation, the dignitary has to watch the Busos with the greatest scrutiny, to prevent them from swallowing the pearls with the oysters; a trick which they perform with so much dexterity, as almost to defy detection, and by means of which they often manage to secrete the most valuable pearls. The government portion is next opened with the same precautions, and taken into possession by the Armador. And last of all, the Busos open theirs, and sell them to the Armador,

in liquidation of debts incurred for their outfits, or of moneys advanced during the voyage. They usually reserve a few to sell to dealers on shore, who always accompany these expeditions with spirituous liquors, chocolate, sugar, cigars, and other articles of which these Indian divers are especially fond. Since the Mexicans obtained their independence, another mode of division has been adopted. Every time the Busos come up, the largest oyster which he has obtained is taken by the Armador and laid aside for the use of the Virgin Mary. The rest are thrown in a pile; and when the day's diving is ended, eight oysters are laid out for the Armadors, eight for the Busos, and two for the government.

"In the year 1831, one vessel with seventy Busos, another with fifty, and two with thirty each, and two boats with ten each, from the coast of Senora, engaged in this fishery. The one brought in forty ounces of pearls, valued at $6,500; another twenty-one ounces, valued at $3,000; another twelve ounces, valued at $2,000; and the two boats a proportionate quantity. There were in the same season ten or twelve other vessels, from other parts, employed in the trade; which, if equally successful, swelled the value of pearls taken in that year to the sum of more than $40,000.

"This pearl-fishery, indeed, is the principal source of wealth in Lower California. From the soil little can ever be derived; unless the deserts and mountains, like other volcanic districts on the west coast of the continent, should prove to be stored with the precious metals. There is a high probability that this may be found the case; for a mine called San Antonio, near La Paz, which

has been wrought somewhat, is said to be rich. In addition to the products of this mine and the pearls, there is a limited export of dates, wines, grapes, soap, figs, mazcal, spirits, salt from a lake on the island Del Carmine, and a few goat and beeves' hides."

END OF VOL I.

F. Shobert, Jun., Printer to H.R.H. Prince Albert, Rupert Street.

On Stone by R. J Hamerton

W R. Ryan. del

Metzum & Co lith Adam St Strand

THE STANISLAUS MINE

W. Shoberl, Publisher, 31 St Marlborough Street 1851

PERSONAL ADVENTURES

ER

LIFORNIA,

8-9;

RIENCE AT THE MINES.

REE DRAWINGS, TAKEN ON

OT.

MOND RYAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LONDON:
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AND

LOWER CALIFORNIA,

IN 1848-9;

WITH THE AUTHOR'S EXPERIENCE AT THE MINES.

ILLUSTRATED BY TWENTY-THREE DRAWINGS, TAKEN ON THE SPOT.

BY

WILLIAM REDMOND RYAN.

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PERSONAL ADVENTURES

IN

UPPER AND LOWER CALIFORNIA.

CHAPTER XVII.

The first night at the "diggins"—The gold pockets or "diggins"—Trading posts—Speculation—An old acquaintance—News of old friends—Fortune capricious even in California—Gold-digging hard work—Sonoreans "dry-washing" for gold—Quality of the ore—Exploration of the mine—The source of the precious deposits—Morals of the miners or diggers—Doctor Dan—Another old acquaintance—Intelligence from other mines—The North Fork—Sutter's Fort and Mill—Shirt-washing more profitable than gold-washing—Halliday's ill luck.

The mine was a deep ravine, embosomed amidst lofty hills, surmounted by and covered with pine, and having, in the bottom itself, abundance of rock, mud, and sand. Halliday

and I encamped at the very lowest part of the ravine, at a little distance from Don Emanuel's party; a steep rock which towered above our heads affording us shelter, and a huge, flat stone beneath our feet promising a fair substitute for a dry bed. Here then we stretched our *macheers* and blankets, and arranged our saddles and bags, so as to make ourselves as comfortable and warm as possible, although, in spite of our precautions and contrivances, and of a tolerably good fire, our encampment was bitterly cold, and we lay exposed to a heavy dew. We had given up our horses into the charge of the Indians, and I saw to their being safely placed in the *cavallard*, whilst Halliday went to chop wood; a task I was too weak to perform. I cannot say we slept; we might more correctly be said to have had a long and most uncomfortable doze, and when morning broke, we were shivering with cold, and shook the dew in a shower from our clothes. I consulted with my companion, and urged upon him the prudence of our setting to work to construct ourselves a sort of log cabin:

otherwise I felt certain, from the experience of the past night, our sojourn at the mines would be likely to prove fatal to one or both of us. He was, however, far too eager to try his fortune at digging to listen to my proposal, at which he even smiled, probably at the bare idea of weather, privation, or toil, being able to affect his powerful frame. I saw him presently depart up the ravine, shouldering a pick, and glancing now and then at his knife, whilst I proceeded in search of materials for constructing a temporary place of shelter.

As my strength was unequal to the task of felling timber, I endeavoured to procure four poles, intending to sink them into the ground, and to stretch on the top of them a bed-tick I had reserved for the purpose. The contrivance was a sorry one at the best, but shelter was indispensable; and great was my disappointment — though I procured the timber after a painful search — to find that the rocks presented an insuperable obstacle to my employing it as I intended. My efforts to sink the poles proved utterly futile, and I

was at last compelled to renounce the attempt in despair. I then packed up our goods into as close a compass as possible; and, having requested one of the Spaniards in Don Emanuel's party to keep watch over them, departed to explore the ravine.

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

jack-knife, had not been busy: evidence that the whole locality must have been extremely rich in the precious metal, or it would not have been so thoroughly worked.

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

I walked on until I reached the trading-post of Mr. Anderson, formerly our interpreter in the Lower Country, whom I felt delighted to meet with again. His shed was situated in one of the dampest parts of the mine, and consisted of a few upright poles, traversed by cross-pieces, and covered in with raw hides and leaves, but yet much exposed at the sides to the wind and the weather. He had a few barrels of flour and biscuit, which

he retailed at two dollars a pound; for he made no difference between the price of the raw and the prepared material. The flour would go further, it was true; but then the biscuit required no cooking on the part of the miner, whose time was literally money, and whose interest therefore it was to economize it in every possible manner. He also sold unprepared coffee and sugar at six Yankee shillings a pound; dried beef at one dollar and a half; and pork, which was regarded as a great delicacy here, at two dollars for the same weight. The various articles of which his stock-in-trade consisted he had brought all the way from Monterey at considerable labour and expense; but, by the exercise of extraordinary tact, perseverance, and industry, he had succeeded in establishing a flourishing business.

I discovered, however, that he possessed another resource—by which his gains were marvellously increased — in the services of seven or eight Indians, whom he kept constantly at work, in the rear of his shed, dig-

ging gold, and whose labour he remunerated with provisions, and occasional presents of articles of trifling value to him, but highly esteemed by the Indians. They were watched by an American overseer, who was employed by him, to assist him in the general business, particularly in slaughtering; for, as beef was scarce, he used to send his man in quest of cows and oxen; which he killed, cut up, salted and dried, in his shed, and watching the most favourable moment for the operation—namely, when meat could not be procured at the "diggins" — never failed to realize his own price for it.

Proceeding higher up the ravine, I observed a large tent erected on the slope of a hill, within a few yards of the bottom, where the gold is usually found. It was surrounded by a trench, the clay from which, as it was dug up, had apparently been thrown out against the canvass, forming a kind of embankment, rendering it at once water and weather-proof. I ventured into it, encountering on my way an immense piece of raw beef, suspended from

the ridge-pole. Upon some stones in front, enclosing a small fire, stood a fryingpan, filled with rich-looking beef collops, that set my mouth watering, and severely tested my honesty; for, although acorns are all very well in their way, and serve to stay the cravings of the stomach for awhile, I did not find my appetite any the less sharp, notwithstanding the quantity I had eaten. But I resisted the temptation, and penetrated further into the tent. At one side of it lay a crow-bar, and an old saddle that had seen rough service; yet not a soul appeared, and my eyes were again ogling the collops, whilst an inward voice whispered how imprudent it was to leave them frizzling there, when, all at once, a little man, in a "hickory shirt," with his face all bedaubed with pot-black and grease, darted out from some dark corner, flourishing in one hand a long bowie-knife, and in the other three by no means delicate slices of fat pork, which he at once dropped into the fryingpan, stooping down on one knee, and becoming immediately absorbed in

watching the interesting culinary process then going on in it.

I enjoyed now a fair opportunity of examining his features, and felt much gratified to recognise in him one of my former companions, the smartest man of his corps, and whom I had last seen at Monterey.

"Good morning, Firmore," said I; "I wish you joy of your occupation."

He started up from his knees, and looked at me awhile in perfect amazement; then rushing upon me with such earnestness as nearly to throw me down, he shook me by the hand until I thought he would work my arm out of its socket.

"What, you!" he exclaimed. "Well, well. Who ever would have thought to see you here! How did you come, and where did you start from? You are looking all the worse for wear."

"I can't say you look quite as dapper, Firmore," replied I, "as you did the day we went ashore at Valparaiso. But I suppose

you have no cause to complain, for you appear to weather it well."

"Oh, I don't know that!" he responded: "I have had but indifferent luck. For several days after I got here, I did not make any thing; but since then I have, by the hardest work, averaged about seven dollars a day. When you consider the price of provisions, the hardness of the labour, and the wear and tear of body, mind, and *clothes*" — here he exhibited his rags — "you will admit that this is but poor remuneration. However, I live in hopes of getting a streak of luck yet. I am now cooking for our party. There are ten of us, and amongst the rest are Van Anken and Hughes. Van has been immensely fortunate. Every place he touches turns to gold under his fingers. Sometimes, after exhausting one place, he tries another which has been abandoned, and I have known him pick out of it seven and eight ounces a day, for days together. One thing is, he never tires. He is, as you know, a stout though a small-made man, with a constitution as tough as

old iron. He laughs at fever and ague, and goes to sleep by the side of them as though they were first-rate bedfellows. It's astonishing the number of men who have lost a fortune through these two complaints; when they're touched, good bye. If their "diggin" were ever so rich, they're obliged to desert it; and, once deserted, why not even their own brother would respect it. Hughes, now, has been every bit as unlucky. He has had the poorest chance of all, and I don't think he has dug more than five ounces ever since he came here."

"I should have thought him likelier to succeed than any other," I observed; "for he is a large and a strong-looking man."

"Ah! it's more luck than any thing else," replied he. "But, luck or no luck, no man can pick up gold, even here, without the very hardest labour, and that's a fact. Some think that it is only to come here, squat down anywhere, and pick away. But they soon find out their mistake. I never knew what hard work was until I came here. Talk of

digging on the canal; why, that's easy, comfortable employment, compared to digging here for gold. Anywhere else, you may hope to go to some sort of a home at night, and go to something like a tolerable bed, where you may lie down snug and warm, and sleep out your weariness. But here, why every hour you sleep, you are losing; and that notion keeps you from snoozing even when it's too dark to work. However, I've made up my mind to stick to it till I've made enough to go back to the 'States' independent; or, at any rate, a little more so than when I came out. Ah! here are our boys."

I looked out and beheld the party coming down the ravine, with crow-bars over their shoulders and wash-bowls under their arms. Van appeared glad to meet with me again; and, I must say, that, notwithstanding the inordinate selfishness brought into action by the peculiar circumstances in which the miners were placed, the *esprit-de-corps* of the volunteers prevented and alleviated much suffering amongst individuals. They cordially

THE "DIGGINS"—SONOREANS DRY-WASHING GOLD.

invited me to breakfast, but, fearing so large a party was not over-abundantly supplied with provisions, I declined their offer with many thanks; and, bidding them good morning, proceeded a little further.

I came up next with a group of three Sonoreans, or inhabitants of Sonora, busily engaged on a small sandy flat—the only one I had observed—at the bottom of the ravine. There was no water near, although I noticed several holes which had evidently been sunk in quest of it. These men were actively pursuing a process that is termed "dry-washing." One was shovelling up the sand into a large cloth, stretched out upon the ground, and which, when it was tolerably well covered, he took up by the corners, and shook until the pebbles and larger particles of stone and dirt came to the surface. These he brushed away carefully with his hand, repeating the process of shaking and clearing until the residue was sufficiently fine for the next operation. This was performed by the other men, who, depositing the sand in large bowls hewn out of a solid

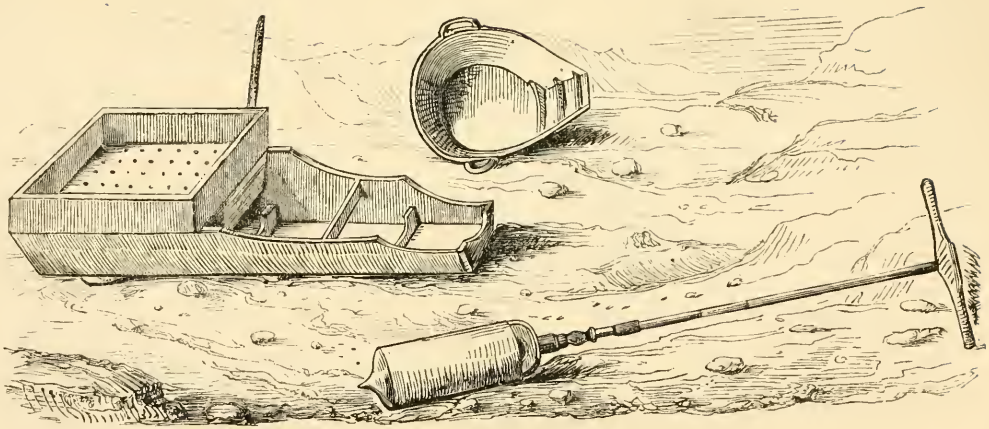
block of wood, which they held in their hands, dexterously cast the contents up before them, about four feet into the air, catching the sand again very cleverly, and blowing at it as it descended. This process being repeated, the sand gradually disappeared; and from two to three ounces of pure gold remained at the bottom of the bowl. Easy as the operation appeared to me to be, I learned, upon inquiry, that to perform it successfully required the nicest management, the greatest perseverance, and especially robust lungs. The men I saw had lighted upon a productive sand; but very often, indeed, those who adopt this mode of gold-washing toil long at barren soil before they discover the uselessness of labouring thus arduously.

I noticed, that although the largest proportion of the gold obtained in this manner presented the appearance of a fine powder, it was interspersed, here and there, with large scales of the precious deposit, and with a few solid lumps. The metal was of a dingy hue, and, at a cursory view, might easily have been

mistaken for particles of yellow clay, or laminæ of stone of the same colour. The Sonoreans placed the product of their labour in buckskin bags, which were hung around their necks, and carefully concealed inside of their shirts. They work in this fashion at the mines in their own country; but I doubt if any other than a native constitution could very long bear up against the peculiar labour of "dry-washing" in such a climate and under such difficult circumstances. I felt half tempted to try the process myself, for the surface of this sandy bed was literally sparkling with innumerable particles of the finest gold, triturated to a polish by the running of the waters—as I conjectured: but I soon discovered how fruitless my efforts would be. Had I possessed any chemical agents at hand, however, I might soon have exhausted the bed of its precious contents, and should, doubtless, have realized an immense weight of the metal of the very purest quality.

I may as well mention here, that of the various new machines manufactured and sent

out to California for the purpose of digging and washing gold, the great majority have been found quite useless. There are two or three of them, however, that have been employed with great success. I have made a sketch of those most in use amongst the diggers, as my readers may feel desirous of acquainting themselves with the latest improvements introduced in the art of mining, as practised in this country. They consist, in the first place, of the washing-rocker, or "cradle," which has, in numerous instances, formed the model for ruder machines, constructed by the miners themselves whilst in the mountains. The lid, at the bottom of which lie the holes through which the gold and soil pass, is fastened by hinges at the back, in order that it may be raised up the more readily to throw off, from time to time, the stones that accumulate. Three men are required to work this rocker with success, and there are few processes in which a smaller number could operate without extraordinary labour. One person throws the soil upon the



W. R. Ryan, del.

GOLD ROCKER—WASHING PAN—GOLD BORER.

lid, another pours on the water, whilst a third is engaged in rocking the cradle by the handle attached to it for the purpose. In this way these men keep each other constantly employed; and, indeed, this cradle, like its prototype, has often proved the bond of union between individuals who would otherwise have separated, for this simple reason, that one man could not work it half so profitably alone. The cross pieces, observable at the bottom, serve to intercept the gold as it flows towards the smaller end of the machine, whilst the dirt is carried off by the admixture with the water produced by the continual "rocking." As the earth becomes thoroughly dissolved, the gold naturally gravitates to the bottom; and thus it is impossible for any but the very finest particles of the ore to escape.

The second machine, in importance, is the gold-borer. It is particularly useful in examining the bottom of streams, and consists of a short conical cylinder at the end of a long handle, containing inside, at its lower extremity, a valve, arranged so as to admit the earth

and gold, and prevent their escaping when the receptacle is full. This instrument is used in the same manner as an augur. The third machine, the pan, is also of late introduction, but has been found rather too deep for the purpose for which it is intended.

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

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

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

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

the higher districts, and which, soon accumulating, swell into rapid torrents, which rush down these ravines with extraordinary swiftness and force, sweeping every thing before them.

There did not appear to be many mining-parties at the Stanislaus at this particular period, for the encampments were generally from two to five miles apart, the space between them increasing the higher you advanced towards the mountains, to the foot of which the ravine extended — altogether, a distance of many miles. The lower part of the mine, I concluded from this fact, to be by far the richer, simply from the circumstance I have mentioned: richer, comparatively, because here the deposits of gold are more easily found and extracted; not richer, in reality, as the metal must exist in immense quantities in the upper regions, from which it is washed down by the rains and floods into the lower districts. The virgin deposit would, doubtless, be difficult to come at; but, if sought after at all, that

it is to be sought in the mountains and high lands, I feel persuaded.

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

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

On inquiring whether, as there existed such strong temptation, robberies were not very

frequent, I was informed, that, although thefts had occurred, yet, generally speaking, the miners dwelt in no distrust of one another, and left thousands of dollars' worth in gold-dust in their tents whilst they were absent digging. They all felt, intuitively, that honesty was literally the best policy, and a determination to punish robbery seemed to have been come to by all as a measure essential to the security and welfare of the mining community, independent of any question of principle.

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

always be procured. They went on until the *placers* failed to yield, and were then reduced to great extremities.

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

I did not find Halliday when I reached our encampment, but saw that Don Emanuel's party had not lost time; for, with their waggons, and a few boards and sticks, they had succeeded in establishing a sort of store, or

trading-post, where the articles they had brought were already exhibited for sale, and disposed in tempting array. I whiled away the time here, until about six o'clock in the evening, when Halliday came back, wearied, disappointed, and depressed in spirits. He had gone some distance up the ravine, working alternately with the crow-bar and the knife, but had not succeeded in getting fifty cents worth of gold. We sat down to an unsavoury mess of flour and fish boiled up together, until, finding we could not enliven each other, our fire even burning cheerlessly in the bright glare of Don Emanuel's—built up of heavy logs, cut down and brought there by the Indians—we ended by rejoining his party, for we felt lonely and dispirited to the last degree.

We found the group increased by several newcomers, and amongst these was Doctor Dan, a diminutive, fair-haired Irishman, well known in this part of the mining districts. In his younger days, he had taken a fresh start in life as a captain's clerk, having shipped him-

self on board a trading-vessel; but, in consequence of a disagreement with his superior, and of an accident which for a time deprived him of the use of one arm, quitted the vessel on her reaching her destination, and found himself thrown on his own resources.

Amongst the priesthood of California, there happened to be a gentleman of Irish descent, the Reverend Mr. Murphy, to whom Dan soon procured an introduction, the result of which was, that Mr. Murphy ascertained that he possessed a knowledge—such as it was—of drugs and medicine, picked up in an apothecary's store, where he had been employed, and advised him to set up for a doctor, which advice Dan—now Doctor Dan—forthwith adopted and acted upon, and through Murphy's influence and recommendation, soon got into a very extensive practice in the town and neighbourhood of San Barbara. He improved upon his success by marrying a Californian lady, with whom he obtained a good *ranché* and a valuable stock of cattle.

On the setting-in of the gold fever, the Doc-

tor, who had a turn for business, departed for the mines, determined to add to his wealth by trading, and turning his professional skill to account; and I was credibly informed that he, on one occasion, realized at the rate of one hundred dollars per dose of quinine, a medicament much in vogue, and of which he had contrived to secure a monopoly for the time. I found him a joyous, pleasant sort of fellow, with a fund of native shrewdness, and a tolerable share of information, considering the limited opportunities he had enjoyed.

In the course of conversation, I was in turn recognised by an old companion, one Frederick Whittle, whom I had last seen at New York, but whom I certainly should not have known again, from the change that had taken place in him, from the gentlemanly young fellow to the rough miner. His face, which was still round and florid, was half-covered with a huge, shaggy beard flowing down nearly to his waist. He wore a short, green-baize jacket, buckskin breeches, leather leggings, and a wide-brimmed hat; his neck enwrapped in a dirty red hand-

kerchief, and altogether presenting, in his entire person, an appearance so different from the spruce exterior with which my memory was familiar, that it was no wonder I remained for some time doubtful of his identity.

In consequence of a disagreement with his father, he had quitted the paternal roof, intending to make a journey to the mines, and not to return without a competency.

"I have been working a long time at the North Fork," he said, in reply to a question of mine, "where I had a rich spot, though it had been dug before. I got about five hundred dollars there; but, finding the "diggin" exhausted, and hearing a good account of the Stanislaus, I came on to it, but have not met with much success. Some days, however, I have been very lucky, and obtained from five to ten ounces at a time."

I ventured upon some inquiries respecting the North Fork, to which he replied—

"I started from Sacramento city for Sutter's Fort, getting my baggage conveyed by steamer. I reached a *ranché* close by the

South American Fork, then struck across a prairie for several miles, till I got right into the mountains, from which I made direct for Sutter's mill. It was here, you know, that gold was first discovered, and upon search being made, found to be plentiful throughout the country. The mill itself is situated at the south part of the town of Culloma. A tree denotes the spot where the first gold was found. It is thrown across the stream, opposite the original 'diggins.' Some men in the employment of Mr. Marshall, of that place, who were sinking a well, hit upon it, and the news spread like wildfire."

"But what of this Sutter's Fort, we've heard so much about?"

"Well, it's a smart little town for California, about forty-five miles from Sacramento city, the greater portion of it belonging to this Mr. Marshall. It contains about three hundred regular built houses, about a story and a half high; but they are now erecting a magnificent hotel there, and the place is likely to grow to anything. Most of the houses are of wood,

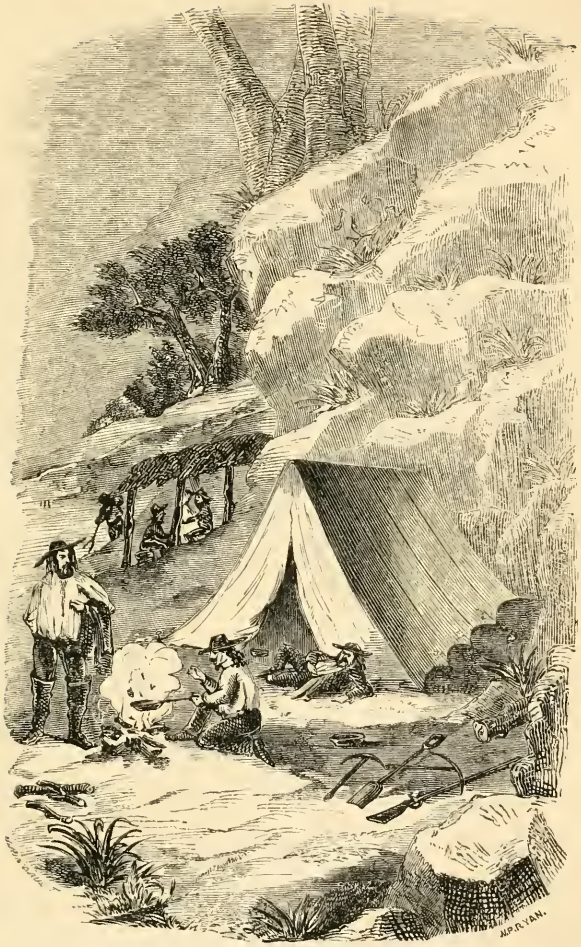
but there are a good many tents. They were already beginning to build on the other side of the river when I left. The town is situated in a valley, and right on the South American Fork. To the north of it is a wooden bridge, to cross which a toll of twenty-five cents each person is exacted; and, on the opposite side, is the road to the Middle and North Forks. Whilst there, I met some old friends, who had just returned from the Dutch Bar. Their success had been varied, some coming back well laden, others indifferently, but all with something. It seems, however, that at these 'diggins' there was nothing but bickering and quarrelling going on, even fathers and sons separating and working each for himself. But there, as at all these 'diggins,' it isn't the diggers who get the bulk of the gold, but the traders and speculators. I even know a person whose wife made a very handsome sum by washing linen, whilst her husband was away at the mines. Think of twelve dollars a dozen, eh! Her husband remained absent somewhere about four weeks; and, though he came back

with a pretty good 'find,' she, good woman, laughed outright at his gold-washing, for her shirt-washing had realized, during the same period, nearly double the value in dollars of the ore he had found."

I coincided in the opinion of my friend, that industry of any kind, applied in these districts to alleviate the privations or add to the comforts of the miners, offered a far readier source of riches than the gold-pockets themselves; and that a steady application to some practical mode of meeting the circumstances in which they were placed was a surer method of securing a competency than slaving at the mines.

It was late before Halliday and I returned to our camp. We were neither of us in good spirits, and could not compose ourselves to sleep, so much were we excited by the novelty of our position, and so intense was the cold.

"I tell you what," said he, as he tossed about under his blanket; "this mining, or gold-hunting, is not what I thought it was, nor what it has been represented to be. I worked



LIFE AT THE "DIGGINS"—SUPPER TIME.

harder to-day than I ever did in my life, and all for what? Why, not more than twenty-five cents! I shall try it again to-morrow, and for a few days more; but, if I don't meet with better luck, I shall look out for more profitable employment."

"We must turn our attention to something, that's certain," I replied; "for our stock of provisions will not last beyond ten days, and when they are gone, I don't quite see how we are to exist, unless we get a stroke of luck. I suppose there *is* gold, Halliday."

"Yes, no doubt. But it's everything to find it."

"Well, if I had your strength and health, I would try the 'diggin' myself. But I fear the toil would be too severe for me, particularly as we are so badly lodged. I could not work all day, and pass the night in this manner, without knocking up within eight and forty hours. We must have a shed, Halliday, and that's the long and short of it."

"I don't know who's to get the timber for it," retorted he. "It's no such easy task to

fell it on the hills yonder, and bring it down here. Besides, we shouldn't have time. No! I shall rough it, and continue the digging, as I said before."

"Then you may depend upon it, I shall follow your example, Halliday. I am not going to remain here watching our property and cooking, whilst you are away digging. If you won't assist me to put up a bit of a shed, why our things must take their chance. I shall try my hand to-morrow, and leave the traps to take care of themselves."

My companion muttered something in reply; and, as he did not seem inclined to continue the conversation, which certainly was not of the pleasantest kind, I left him to his own meditations, and confined my thoughts to myself, until I dropped off into a most comfortless doze.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Gold-digging and gold-washing—Reflections and moralizings put to flight—My first attempt at gold-washing—Further account of the Stanislaus Mine—The Mormon Diggins, and Carson's Creek—The Indians—An end to my mining fit—I turn trader—Removal up the mine—Start for Stocton—The town of Stocton—Paper at a premium—Robberies and murders—My friend Burke—Additional particulars respecting the mines—News of O'Reilly—Doings at the Macalamo—Lynch law—Resolution to leave Stocton.

After breakfast next day, Halliday and I went out to try our luck at digging, and came up to Van Anken's party, whom we found busily employed. Firmore was washing clay in pans, which another of the party had just cast in. These pans were of tin, about eighteen inches wide, and perhaps two deep. The clay, or sand, was selected according to certain peculiar indications of richness, and being deposited in the pans, and covered with water, the latter were shaken from side to

side, until the soil became saturated. The water was then poured off, and the process repeated, the sand and clay gradually disappearing, and the gold—if the soil contained any—remaining at the bottom, where it naturally descended, owing to its greater specific gravity. The operation is by no means difficult, requiring only a moderate amount of patience. Each panful I saw thus treated gave a return of gold in scales, averaging from one to two dollars in value. There is no doubt, however, that large quantities of the minuter particles of the ore, and the finest of the dust, are lost by this process, for a close inspection of the sand, and of the soil generally, satisfied me that any person possessing sufficient chemical knowledge and the requisite materials for separating the gold from the soil, and bringing the former to a focus, might easily realize several hundred thousand dollars, and this within a comparatively short period, and within an area of ground not exceeding one square mile.

Van Anken adhered perseveringly to the

rich, crumbling slate, that stood edgewise before him, digging might and main, alternately employing his pick, crow-bar, and jack-knife, according to the difficulties he had to encounter in the nature of the soil. The rest of the party were equally diligent, at short distances from one another, either extending the old holes, or forming new ones, but all intent at their work, and absorbed in the accomplishment of the one idea ever present to their minds, namely, the realization of a rapid fortune.

For my own part, now I was here, and could the more fully enter into the philosophy and fact of the thing, I began to entertain strong misgivings as to whether the results attained by such severe toil were at all commensurate with the sacrifices made in connexion with it. According to my belief, and looking at the men as they wrought, no amount of success they might hope for could ever sufficiently compensate them — accustomed as the majority had been to the comforts and even refinements of civilized society

—for the privations and hardships they were compelled to endure; for the disruption of those social ties which bind men together; for the estrangement of the affections of their kith and kin; for the mental abnegations they must practise; for physical suffering and prostration; for the constant apprehension they dwelt in of dying a lingering death by fever and ague; and for the disorganization of habits which such a mode of life was calculated to induce even amongst the best regulated minds. They wrought so hard and so perseveringly, that I felt persuaded that the same amount of industry, intelligence, and assiduity, conjoined with the exercise of the many virtues which the difficulties they had to encounter brought into activity, if it had been directed to the accomplishment of the same end, through the channels opened by the different professions and callings, must have resulted in securing to them an honourable position and a competency, without exposing them to the temptations of cupidity, or the follies of a speculative extravagance.

But all my moralizings applied equally to myself, and were brought to an abrupt close by a boisterous exclamation from Halliday.

"Luck, by G—!" said he, tossing up a small lump of gold, which he had succeeded in picking out with his knife from a hole at which he had stopped, whilst I stood gazing at the extraordinary scene around me, absorbed in my reflections.

This was quite enough to drive all philosophy out of my head, and I forthwith looked out for a likely place, and began to dig away as busily as the rest.

I wrought in good earnest the whole of that day, and was completely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, I renewed the operation on the following one, and got about six dollars'-worth of gold; whilst Halliday procured to the value of ten. The day after, we were both tolerably fortunate, bringing in between us about three ounces; but, during the remainder of the time we sojourned at the mine, Halliday did not average more than eight dollars a day, and I seldom exceeded

from four to six. In the middle of the day, the heat became so intense, that I was compelled to discontinue my labours, and rest awhile, whilst the exhalations arising from the dampness of the ground where I washed the clay were no less oppressive and injurious. In fact, as the time advanced, I felt myself growing weaker; and, as our provisions were nearly exhausted, it became necessary to determine upon some course for the future. The result of our deliberations will appear in due place.

I had resolved upon seeing a little of the neighbouring country whilst I had the opportunity, and learning something further respecting the "upper diggins," namely "Carson's Creek," and the "Mormon diggins," although both were by this time pretty well worn out. They are situated a good distance up the ravine, the latter being distant from the Stanislaus about a mile to the eastward. It had been considered as the best *placer* during the preceding spring, and many of the miners dug from two ounces to two pounds of

gold a day. "Carson's Creek," which derives its name from a soldier who discovered it during a furlough, had been also tolerably productive.

At the time I am now speaking of, however, the mineral wealth of both these mines, as well as of a third, called Angel's Camp, had considerably diminished, and they were much upon the same footing as the Stanislaus, in this respect. I was informed that during the previous winter a great quantity of rain and snow had fallen in these parts of the Stanislaus, in consequence of which, the miners had been exposed to great privations, and provisions had risen to an enormous price, flour reaching four dollars a pound; pork, five; biscuit, three, and rice, two; whilst beef was not to be procured at any price. The general appearance and peculiarities of these *placers* did not present any characteristic difference from those other sections of the Stanislaus to which I have already alluded: there were numerous tents, good, bad, and indifferent; stores and gambling-booths; shanties

and open encampments; and miners busy everywhere.

At the upper crossing of the Stanislaus River, I met with a large party of Americans, encamped near an Indian village containing about six hundred warriors, of whom an Irish *ranchéro*, named Murphy, is the head, he having married the sister of the principal chief. He keeps a trading-post, and furnishes the Indians with clothing and other necessaries, in return for their services in digging gold for him. I saw here a very fine specimen of the ore, weighing about five pounds, and which one of the Indian miners had picked out with a common sheath-knife.

I learned that great misunderstandings had arisen, and still existed, between the Indians and the white men of the surrounding "diggins," in consequence of the numerous thefts —particularly of horses—which it was alleged the former daily committed; and many savage murders were likewise attributed to them. It was in due time ascertained that these crimes were perpetrated by the Indians of the snowy

range, one of whom was taken by a party of Americans and Indians, and who, having been examined before a council hastily assembled for the purpose of investigating the circumstances under which a suspicion of murder rested upon him, confessed to having assassinated the individual in question—one Talmadge, a volunteer—out of revenge for injuries inflicted upon his people by the white men. Upon his own declaration to this effect, he was shot.

I found the Indians I first alluded to extremely punctilious in their dealings. A party of them came to our camp one evening, and one of them, pointing to his mouth and to some flour lying in a bag near me, signified his wish to have some. I offered him as much as I could spare, perhaps about a pound, which one of the squaws put into a sort of apron, and tied about her waist. The Indian then handed me a small piece of gold, of the value of from five to six dollars. I might have sold all the flour I possessed at the same rate, for this article had been en-

tirely bought up, and could not be purchased, save at an enormous price.

The squaws were finely-proportioned women, but their features were somewhat coarse; a characteristic of the race. Their heads were fantastically adorned with feathers and a few pieces of yellow cloth, whilst their persons were very scantily attired. Most of them were armed with a bow and arrows, the former being made of the toughest and most elastic wood, lined on the inner side with the strong sinews of some wild animal, which adhere to the surface of the wood by the application of a glutinous matter resembling gum. Their arrows are straight, and highly finished, being armed at the point with sharp triangular pieces of flint, barbed by careful chipping, and neatly bound on. These arrows are extremely difficult to withdraw from the flesh; and those who are wounded by them prefer having the whole missile pulled through the injured part to submitting to the painful process of a more scientific abstraction. Very few of the Indians of this country possessed

firearms at the period of which I speak; but I doubt not the American speculators will soon introduce them as a profitable article of trade, notwithstanding the injurious consequences that are certain to result from them, not only to the natives themselves, but to the settlers of the surrounding country.

To return, however, to what more immediately relates to myself, I may state, that finding trading more remunerative than gold-digging, I began to take advantage of any opportunities that presented themselves, to dispose of such articles as I could spare, to whoever felt inclined to give me a price for them. A pair of pistols, which I had purchased at Monterey for eleven dollars and a half, I now sold to Corrigan for seven ounces of gold, and subsequently ascertained that he refused twelve for them higher up the ravine. My old musket fetched two ounces; an overcoat that I had worn during my stay in California, and would really not have been worth a dollar anywhere but at the mines, realized twenty-four dollars; and getting now into the true

Yankee spirit of trade, I went on in this manner, until I made up a purse containing about three hundred dollars.

Halliday followed my example, and succeeded equally well: for instance, he procured in gold double their real value, for some few dollars of coined money, which he sold to Don Emanuel's Indians, who, being inveterate gamblers, found dollars more convenient than gold-dust, and did not mind a sacrifice to procure them. I ascertained also that he had agreed to accompany Doctor Dan on an excursion to Stocton, the Doctor's intention being to take his waggons and cattle there, to fetch up a large quantity of provisions to retail at the mine on his return. For his services, Halliday was to receive nine ounces of gold. The distance to Stocton and back, from the Stanislaus, is about one hundred and thirty miles. Previously to his leaving, however, we removed three miles further up the ravine. The reason of our doing so was, that we might still be near Don Emanuel's party; for the Don, discovering that the spot he had

at first selected to establish his trading-post was neither salubrious nor profitable, shifted his quarters, and we were obliged to do the same, being unable to take care of our horses, which, so long as we remained near the Don, his Indians looked after. He chose a gentle slope on the right side of the ravine; and the Indians, falling to work, soon cut down a sufficient number of poles, which they sank into the ground, surmounting them with cross-pieces, and covering them with boards from the waggons, and, lastly, enclosing the whole structure with raw hides. This made the Don a good dry store, where he transacted his affairs in comparative comfort.

Our stock of provisions being now exhausted, we purchased some biscuit and beef, and resumed our mining operations with such indifferent success, that, as Halliday had made up his mind to seek a more remunerative employment, and was even about to set out upon his trip to Stocton, I also determined to renounce gold-digging here, and to return to Monterey as soon as possible.

At length the day arrived on which Doctor Dan's party and Halliday were to depart for Stocton. I did not start with them, in consequence of a slight difference with Halliday on the subject of my horse; but, in the course of two hours after their departure, I determined upon following in their track; and accordingly packing up my baggage, and having provided myself with a proper supply of provisions, I bade adieu to my friends at the Stanislaus, and commenced my journey.

I travelled many weary miles that day: towards dusk, being attracted by the light of a fire in the distance, I hastened on in that direction, and found I had overtaken the Doctor's party. They had encamped somewhat early, as the Doctor had stayed behind, and would not join them until morning. I passed a comfortable night underneath one of the waggons, and slept profoundly.

In the morning the Doctor came up with us, accompanied by another gentleman, a lawyer named Dent, and an intimate friend of his. He had left the States a considerable

TRADING POST IN THE MINES.

time previously to this, and shortly after the discovery of the gold countries, and had been trading with the Indians and the Americans in various parts of the mines, with unusual success. He was now on his way to Stocton, to procure a large supply of champagne brandy and dry goods, his partner meanwhile remaining at the "diggins," to attend to the trading-post. I found him to be a highly intelligent, well-informed gentleman, and learned that he stood in excellent repute as a professional man. His character and habits were of a practical stamp, and well adapted to the half-venturous, half-civilized life of California, during this interesting and bustling period of its history. He was looking forward to the settlement of the country, and appeared sanguine as to the position it would eventually, and at no distant period, occupy as one of the States.

We continued our journey without any incident occurring worthy of record, save that we experienced great privation on one or two occasions, in consequence of the want of

water, and that, as we drew near to Stocton, one of the party, who had frequently made the journey to and fro, pointed out to us the prudence of picking up every log or stick of wood we saw, as it was a scarce article in the town; advice which we followed, and of which we afterwards fully appreciated the value.

I had heard so much of Stocton—so called after the Commodore of that name—that my curiosity was naturally excited to make acquaintance with a place so famous amongst the miners. I counted eight tents, some spiral, others walled-in with canvass, one of which, about fifty feet long, served for a store. There were several bulrush huts, and one immense wooden house in course of erection, some sixty feet square, and promising two stories. It was intended for trading purposes, and had been long required by the proprietor, Mr. Weaver, whose business was very extensive, considering the appearance of the place, and who was the owner of the chief portion of the land about there. He was endeavouring to attract settlers to the spot,

by offering them locations at nominal rents, or land for nothing, provided they would build upon it. In this enterprise he had not as yet been very successful. Indeed, the town—if so it may be called—is situated in a most unwholesome district; the site of it being a low, flat plain, in the immediate neighbourhood of a swamp which, during a great portion of the year, is covered with deep water. Fever and ague, the prevalent maladies in the upper country, rage here in the summer with unmitigated severity, and attack the most robust constitutions; whilst in winter, the fierce winds sweep with unbroken fury through the district, and, adding to its other natura discomforts, namely, a scarcity of fuel and fodder, render a residence here miserable to the last degree. To complete the description, I should add, that every other hut in the town is either a groggery or a gambling-place.

I determined to remain here for a few days, as much out of consideration to my jaded horse as to recruit my own strength; and as

Doctor Dan's party had also determined on stopping a short time, I found myself in the society of some agreeable companions.

The evening after our arrival, Halliday and I went out for a walk; and as he wished to write a letter, but lacked the necessary materials, he asked the owner of one of the bulrush huts if he could *give* him a sheet of paper.

"I can *sell* you one," was the laconic rejoinder; which offer Halliday readily accepting, we entered the establishment. It was a groggery of the lowest description, and at the counter stood two miners, drinking brandy. An elderly female was in attendance, who served us with the sheet of paper, and received from Halliday, in return, a small piece of gold of the value of a shilling. By especial permission, my companion wrote his letter on the counter, owing to an extra exercise of generosity on the part of the landlady, the use of pen and ink for the purpose. As the air was intensely keen, we ventured upon a glass of the liquor, for which we paid very

liberally in gold-dust. It was of execrable quality, and comparable only to vitriol in its effects on the stomach.

Hearing a commotion outside, we proceeded to ascertain its cause, and discovered a tall mountaineer complaining of a loss he had just sustained. He had encamped in a field, at about a mile from Mr. Weaver's trading-store; and, being alone, had left the place for about a quarter of an hour, to look after his horses. He had about nine pounds' weight of gold tied up in a leathern bag, which he left in his tent, and which, on his return, he discovered had been stolen during his brief absence. He came to offer the half of it to anybody who should enable him to recover the bag. He was an Oregon man, and had a wife and large family depending upon the product of his labour at the mines, so that his case was a very hard one. He never got back a grain of the gold; the thief, whoever he was, getting clear away with it, and avoiding detection.

Another Oregon man, and a sailor, his com-

panion, who had been working at "Angel's Camp," on the Stanislaus, also fell victims to the cupidity and lawlessness at this time so prevalent in the Californias. It appears they were on their way from "Angel's Camp" to Stocton, and stopped for the night at a place called "Double Springs," some twenty-one miles distant from the former spot. The Oregon man had about his person about fifteen hundred dollars in gold; and the sailor, who was a mere boy, nine hundred dollars' worth. They were overtaken by two men, who quitted the camp six hours after the departure of the sailor and his comrade, both of whom were found dead on the road; the latter having his head split in two, and the Oregon man's brains being blown out with buck-shot. The murderers, as it appeared, were disturbed whilst rifling their victims, as they left behind them about four hundred dollars' worth of gold belonging to the sailor. A party, upon coming up, discovered the dead bodies, and ascertained that the ruffians had possession of a fowling-piece and of a sword, the pro-

perty of the murdered men, and the instruments with which the deed had been perpetrated. A messenger was instantly despatched to Stocton to give such information as might lead to their detection; but, instead of proceeding to this town, he stopped at a *ranché*, at about eight miles from it, and there got inebriated. Three days after, a party set out in pursuit, but could gain no tidings, further than that two men answering the description of the suspected parties had passed through Stocton, and crossed the San Joachin the same day. One of them having been recognised by some volunteers who had met him on the road, and it being ascertained that his name was Lynch, and that he was a deserter from the Ohio, Commodore Jones immediately offered a reward of a thousand dollars for his apprehension; but, for a considerable time, this offer did not produce any results.

At length the criminals were apprehended, in consequence of the commission of another horrible murder, in the victims of which I

took more than a passing interest, as they were associated with reminiscences of one of our late companions, Monsieur Frederic. It will be remembered that, when he fell in with our party, he was on his way to his master, Mr. Read, who—before he discovered him, however—with eleven of his family, had been assassinated at the mission by a band of five Americans, and robbed of the large amount of gold they possessed. The man Lynch turned out to be the ringleader of this desperate gang, and was shot dead whilst endeavouring to escape from the scene of the murder; another was captured, after a very desperate struggle, and taken to San Barbara, where he was tried and executed. The rest were also apprehended, and were hanged at Pueblo de San José. I chanced, whilst staying here, to encounter an old acquaintance, a volunteer named Burke, who had been sent upon detached service into the Lower Country. He was much travel-worn, and had just come down from the mines, which he had been enabled to visit, long before any

of us had even returned to Monterey. The following was the account he gave me of his adventures.

"I have been all over the mines," said he, "and made money at every thing I turned my hand to, whether trading or digging. Of the two, trading's the best. My last spec. was a capital one. I came down here and bought up a large quantity of miscellaneous articles; and, amongst the rest, a tremendous lot of strong shoes, which I paid for at the rate of four dollars a pair, taking them wholesale. They all went off like wildfire at the mines, where I sold them again at ten and fifteen dollars a pair, and at last at twenty; and the people who wanted shoe-leather didn't think me unreasonable, either."

"Pretty decent profit, too, Burke. But just tell me something about the mines, will you, since you have been to them all."

"Well, sure I can do that," replied he; and, as he enumerated the names, he told them off upon his fingers. "There's the Towallomie, the Stanislaus, the Macalamo, the Merced,

Fremont's Diggins, or, as some call it, the Marriposio, the Calaveras, the Macassimee, the South, Middle, and North Forks, Bear Creek, Juba, Feather River, and the Sacramento. There they all are that I know of, and coming in their order, like A, B, C. But, mind, I only give you the names of the mines; I won't undertake to count the diggins in them, nor to tell you how they are christened."

I felt anxious to make further inquiry respecting the gold districts; and, knowing Burke to be a practical man, who had enjoyed opportunities of inspecting the localities he had enumerated, I pressed him for further information.

"Well," said he, "as to their situation, the whole of them lie between the San Joachin and the Sacramento and the Californian range of mountains. In fact, the mines are nothing more than so many ravines which run across from the range, and are flooded in the rainy season by the torrents that pour down from the upper regions, and which, according to all I could see and learn, bring

the gold along with them from some place where it must lie pretty thick."

"Such, too, is my own notion, though people seem to think it may be found any where in this country, lying waste over an area of from five to eight hundred miles."

"All stuff!" retorted he, contemptuously. "I know better than that, and so do thousands more, by this time. They forget how far they may go before they come to what we miners call a likely place; and how many likely places a party may try before they get any gold out of them that's worth the trouble they've taken to procure it. All stuff and nonsense, I say. If you want gold, you must look for it in certain places; in the ravines, and gullies, and in the beds of the streams; in all sorts of out-of-the-way little crannies, where it hides away like a rabbit in a burrow. You must seek it too in the mud, and clay, and sand, which we all know comes down with the water; and where there has been more found in bulk, though it was small,

than all the big lumps would make put together."

"Yes; it seems, from what little I know about the matter, that these are few and far between."

"As for that, one place is as likely as another, for the big pieces are not scarcer below than they are above."

"What do you think, now, of the lower diggins? Are they better than the upper, or those which are nearest to the mountains?"

"I think they are; but those near the San Joachin and Sacramento have been pretty well worked out by this time, and they who try their luck further up will have to work harder the higher they go, and to look out sharp for provisions."

"I heard that the Macalamo is the richest mine of all."

"Yes, though formerly the Stanislaus was considered superior. It lies north-west from Monterey, at a distance of about two hundred miles, and is a twenty-one days' journey with waggons. The people dig for gold in two

gulches, or ravines; one of these is at the foot of a hill, where the road seems to come to a stop, and which is called the "Macalamo Dry Diggins;" and the other lies a quarter of a mile lower down, nearer the river, the descent to it being some six hundred feet. Our party stopped at the "Dry Diggins;" and the first thing we did was to fix our tents, kill and salt our oxen, cut up the beef, and hang it out to dry. We turned our Californian waggon-wheels into seats, covered our waggons with raw hides, so as to make them waterproof, and then set to work digging."

"Were you successful?"

"Was I? Yes, *I* was; pretty well, and so were a few others. The lucky ones made very large sums in a few hours, but the unlucky did not get more than an ounce a day, which was considered poor wages."

"What is the character of this mine?"

"It's a long ravine, the soil of which is red, and somewhat blueish in places, sand predominating. The blue clay is considered

the richest by the diggers. The sides of the ravine are so steep and irregular, it's as much as a man can do to pick out a level spot to lie down on at night. Trees abound there, more particularly the pine, of which I saw some of a famous size. There are also red wood and white oak. The spruce, too, is plentiful, and is of immense service to the miners, who chop up and bruise the boughs, and boil them. The liquor they drink as a cure for the scurvy, which is very virulent amongst them; I suppose on account of their living so much on salted food, and having no vegetables."

"Were the diggers numerous?"

"When I was there, I suppose there were about three hundred, some living in tents, some encamped under trees, and some in log huts. A good many volunteers got there just as I was coming away, and more were on their way, I heard."

"Did you see or hear any thing of a volunteer named O'Reilly?"

"Did I? Who could be within ten miles

of that noisy, funny, reckless, misunderstandable Irishman, and miss him, any how? He had the most extraordinary run of luck; and has made, by this time, a pretty handsome purse, I should say."

I felt much rejoiced to learn this good news of my quondam comrade, and continued my inquiries, after hearing sundry characteristic anecdotes concerning O'Reilly, the recital of which I will spare the reader.

In reply to a question respecting the relative sizes of the ore, he informed me that the gold taken out of this mine runs large.

"The average size of the lumps," he said, "is about that of a pea; some are as large as a bean; and I have seen pieces that weighed above two pounds. Were you lucky at the Stanislaus?"

"Not very."

"Ah, the fact is, it had been worked out before you got there. It's an awful dull place; no amusement at all, unless one is fond of drinking. I can't say the Macalamo's much better; although it is comparatively

fresher, and more populated. The only pastimes there, besides tippling, are playing at *monté* and poker: nothing else goes down. I have seen bets made, to the amount of thirty-six ounces, on the turn of a card, the general run being from one to six. It's poor fun, at the best of it."

"Had you any robberies up there?"

"Oh, yes; but Lynching soon settled them. One man, a sailor, a deserter from the Ohio, took it into his head, one night, to rob one of the volunteers, who had set up a drinking store. He had already got two bags, containing about five thousand dollars' worth of gold; but, not satisfied with them, grasped at a third, half full of dollars in silver. The jingling of the coin awoke the owner, who, springing up, gave the alarm, and, after a hot pursuit, the thief was captured, and bound to a tree until morning. At about nine, a jury of twelve miners sat to consider the case, a volunteer named Nutman officiating for Judge Lynch. Of course, he was found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged; but,

some opposition being raised to depriving him of life, and a milder punishment suggested, it was finally determined that he should receive a hundred lashes on his bare back, have his ears cut off, and his head shaved, so that he might be everywhere recognised in the mining districts. This sentence gave general satisfaction. The poor wretch was at once fastened by his hands to the branch of a tree, and the fellows proceeded to shave his head, whilst some sailors of the party set to work manufacturing cats. His feet were then tied together to the foot of the tree, and when his head had been shaved, a doctor lopped off his ears. He bled a good deal; but, when the blood was staunched, they set to flogging him; and they didn't spare him, either. After this, they kicked him out.

"Well, he went off, and when he was about half a mile away, stole a mule, and rode over to the 'Calaveras' diggins, where the animal was claimed by the owner. He was thereupon tried for mule-stealing, and sentenced to receive another flogging; but when the miners

came to strip him, they found his back so shockingly cut up, that they took compassion on him, and contented themselves with driving him out of the district, where he never appeared again. There's nothing like Lynch law, after all. It's so prompt and so effectual."

Our conversation embraced a multitude of similar topics, but we parted at last; and, after many days of reflection on what I had heard and seen, I made up my mind not to winter in this part of the country.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Pencillings by the way," by Mr. Weaver—Crossing of the San Joachin—Loss of my steed—A fit of despondency—"Toolie" house on the river—An unchristian and uncharitable "Dean"—Taken for a suspicious character—Recovery of my horse—"Black Jack" in a fix—Hunger stronger than prejudice—"'Twixt the cup and the lip"—Boarding-house society at Pueblo—Return to Monterey.

Having succeeded in purchasing some hard biscuit, at the rate of thirty cents a pound, I started, on the following morning, for the crossing of the San Joachin, which is about fourteen miles from Stocton. I did not encounter a soul on the route: and the sense of loneliness stole upon me to such a degree, that I became a prey to the most gloomy thoughts. After travelling for about eight miles, I perceived an object by no means calculated to relieve me from the depression of spirits under which I laboured—namely, a

graphic representation of a Death's head and cross-bones, which stood out in bold relief from a board nailed to the trunk of a tree a few paces off the road. Expecting to find inscribed under it the account of some horrible murder, I rode up to inspect it more narrowly, and was agreeably surprised to find that it was nothing more than the heading of a simple notification from Mr. Weaver, that any person found killing or maiming the cattle upon that gentleman's *ranché* would be prosecuted with all the rigour of the law. The motive for adopting this terrible device was the probability of its attracting greater attention.

On arriving at the San Joachin, I was somewhat puzzled as to how I should cross it. Seeing an American on the opposite bank, with a large waggon and a couple of yokes of oxen, I shouted out to him to inquire the direction of the bar. He told me to keep to the right, and make towards a certain point which he indicated. Following his instructions, I dashed in, and had got safely half

way across, when I sank up to my arm-pits in the water. The Yankee called out to me to turn to the left, and in doing so I found that the bar had changed its direction. On emerging from the water, I looked with some curiosity at the party with whom I now came up. Amongst them were three females; one apparently the American's wife, the second, a person of rather advanced age, and the third, an interesting girl of about sixteen. A little further on, I observed another Yankee, driving a waggon, who I supposed belonged to the same party. The first man I had seen was a person named Dean, from Monterey, whom I had frequently heard spoken of, as being churlish and disobliging; so I pursued my way, determined to have as little to say to him as possible.

After proceeding for some time, I came to a spot on which several smoking logs gave evidence of a recent encampment, and here I resolved to pass the night. It was at a little distance from the route, surrounded by woods, and affording at intervals glimpses of a vast

plain, on which groups of wild horses were sporting and racing about, in the most varied and graceful attitudes. Unpacking my things, and taking my saddle from my horse, whom I secured by a lasso to a log of timber, I collected some wood, for the purpose of building a fire. Suddenly recollecting that I had no water, I was obliged to go back to the river for some, and on my return I lighted my fire, put some beef and biscuit into a tin cup, the only article I possessed adapted for the purposes of cooking, and soon prepared myself a comfortable supper.

I remained seated over the fire for several hours, buried in my own reflections, in which the folly of travelling alone in these wild regions occupied a prominent place. It must have been about nine o'clock at night, when I suddenly heard my horse snort, and plunge violently, as if frightened. Starting to my feet, I ran to the spot where he was secured, and discovered that the lasso had entirely disappeared, I knew not by what agency, and that he had been left at liberty to roam about

at his pleasure. I tied my bridle round his neck; and, leaving him as much tether as possible, for he had as great need of rest as myself, I made use of the usual Californian leather whip, which was attached to the end of the bridle, to fasten the reins to a tree. Having effectually secured the animal, as I thought, I returned to my fire, and was puzzling my brains as to whether the cayotes or a thief had made away with the lasso, when I heard a creeping noise amongst the bushes, and by the light of the fire suddenly beheld my horse gallop off at the top of his speed. I darted away in pursuit of him; but, recollecting that by chasing him I should only frighten him the more, and make him accelerate his speed, I resolved to take the matter philosophically, and wait patiently until morning, to see what could be done towards recovering him.

But it was by no means an easy task to calm my mind under the circumstances. Alone, fatigued, and indifferently supplied with provisions, it seemed to me that I must inevitably

perish on the road if reduced to the necessity of travelling the remainder of the way on foot. Unable to control the miserable reflections that the apparent hopelessness of my position was continually suggesting to my mind, I at length resolved to try and compose myself to sleep; so, putting down my fire sufficiently to prevent its attracting attention, and wrapping myself up in my blanket, I fell into an uneasy and fitful sort of slumber, which could neither be called sleeping nor waking. In the morning I was on foot at break of day. Ascending every eminence in the neighbourhood from which a view of the surrounding plain could be obtained, I strained my eyes in all directions, to endeavour to catch a glimpse of my stray steed. Not a single living thing was visible within the vast range which the eye could compass. The wild troops of horses that I had seen the previous evening disporting on the plain had disappeared; and the only conclusion at which I could arrive, was that they had seduced away my steed. Resolved, however, to leave no

chance untried, I took my bridle and proceeded to the "toolie" house on the river, in the hope of obtaining some information respecting him.

I here found three men seated before an excellent breakfast of coffee and fritters. The moment I entered, one of them inquired if I was disposed to part with the bit and bridle I held in my hand. I replied that, having lost my horse in some mysterious manner the previous night, I had called in, thinking that they might be able to give me some clue to his recovery, and not with a view to bartering the articles I had with me. They assured me they had seen nothing of the animal, and that, from the circumstances I had related to them, it was far from probable that I should succeed in finding him. I took my departure, stating that, should such be the case, I should be glad to dispose of the articles they wished for, with this condition, that they should also purchase my saddle, spurs, and everything else I could spare, to which they returned a ready assent.

Encamped amongst some bushes within a short distance of the road, I again fell in with the party of Mr. Dean. Notwithstanding the unfavourable prepossessions I had formed of this man, I still confided sufficiently in the generosity of the American character, to fancy that a countryman placed in the distressing circumstances in which I then found myself, might have some claims on his sympathies. I therefore sought him out, and found him at a little distance from the encampment, in the act of driving in his oxen. Addressing him politely, I explained to him the dilemma in which I was placed, and begged of him to allow me to put my saddle, bridle, bit, and spurs on one of his waggons, as I wanted them taken to Monterey, adding, that I would cheerfully pay a reasonable sum for the accommodation. The fellow looked at me for a few moments with a stare of stupid suspicion, and then turned on his heel, without giving me any answer. I was so irritated by the rudeness of his conduct, that I felt very much disposed to knock him down; but, recollecting

that I had been previously well aware of the boorish character of the man, and that my own tattered and ferocious appearance was far from calculated to inspire confidence, I restrained the rising impulse, and returned to the ferryman's hut on the river. I told the party assembled there, that feeling convinced of the little chance I had of recovering my horse, I was now prepared to treat with them for the disposal of the different articles I had enumerated. One of the men immediately stepped out, and declared his willingness to purchase them, adding, however, that he should like to inspect them before concluding the bargain. I accordingly invited him to accompany me to the spot where I had encamped the previous night, but, before doing so, he took care to thrust a brace of revolving pistols into his waist belt, although I was myself only armed with a bowie-knife—another compliment, I suppose, to my personal appearance.

I disposed of all the articles I have mentioned for a couple of ounces of gold, although,

in other places and circumstances, they would have readily fetched six. The bargain struck, I returned to the "toolie" house to receive the price agreed upon, which was paid to me in gold-dust, weighed out by the ferryman. I then went back to my encampment, and packing all the things I could carry, including my blanket, into a knapsack, and fastening the latter upon my back with a short piece of raw hide, (the straps having been long since cut up for stirrup leathers) I took a stick in my hand, determined if possible to make my way on foot to Monterey, a distance of about 130 miles, and the greater portion of which was as difficult, owing to the depth of the sand, as any of the routes in the upper country.

I had compassed about seven or eight miles, when, to my great surprise, I beheld my truant steed looking across the route, as if waiting in expectation of my coming up. Few circumstances that have ever befallen me have filled my heart with greater joy than this incident, for I was broken down with fatigue, and hopeless and desponding in the extreme.

Placing my knapsack at the foot of a large tree, that served me as a landmark, I looked over its contents, in the hope of finding something that might answer the purpose of a lasso. The only article, however, that I could find, was a bed-tick, a portion of which I tore into six strips, tying each pair together, so as to increase their length. The short strips, thus united, formed three long ones, which I twisted separately, till I thought they were sufficiently strong. Then plaiting them together, I had a long rope, which, though clumsy enough, promised to serve until such time as I could obtain something more durable. Approaching the animal slowly and with great caution, so that I might not scare him away, I succeeded in slipping a running noose over his head, and effectually securing him. I then tied the rope round his nose in regular Californian style, by way of a bridle, and, securing my knapsack on his back by means of some more strips, torn from my invaluable bed-tick, I jumped into my seat, and proceeded on my way with a lighter and more cheerful heart.

I soon came in sight of the two Yankee waggons, and resolved to keep them in view as long as possible, consistently with my determination of not placing myself under a compliment to Mr. Dean.

I must not weary the attention of my readers by recapitulating all the details of my journey back to Monterey. They have doubtless already formed a tolerably correct idea of the annoyances and difficulties presented at this time to the adventurous traveller, by the peculiar nature of the country. I fear that, as it is, I have been rather prolix, owing to the anxiety I feel to expose the realities of this rugged road to fortune, and to disabuse the minds of emigrants of the illusions with which the glowing accounts published in the newspapers has naturally filled them. It may be said that my case is an exceptional one; that I did not give mining a fair trial; and that I could not reasonably have expected to succeed. But such is not strictly the fact: many a hardy, resolute man, led away by cupidity, or by the delusive representations of

interested parties, has perished in the attempt to surmount the difficulties of this apparently short cut to wealth. Fever and ague, diarrhœa, and a host of other diseases, are amongst the smallest of the dangers to which the gold seeker is inevitably subjected; and if he escape from the privations and hardships which he has to endure, it is but in too many instances at the expense of a ruined constitution. With regard to myself personally, I had done all that a reasonable and moderately healthy man could do under the circumstances, and I certainly could not accuse myself of having been diverted from my object by lightly formed or groundless apprehensions. Having been already in some degree habituated to a mountain life, I believe but few persons could have treated more lightly its privations and dangers, and my return at this season was only dictated by the conviction that I should be running great risks without any adequate return. I had made up my mind, however, to revisit the mines in the following spring, when I hoped to have fairer chances of success.

Keeping Dean's waggons always in view, and moving at the rate of about twelve miles a day, I arrived in a few days at Livermore's Farm, where I encamped under a large tree, a little in advance of the Yankee. Nothing could be more miserable than the night I spent here, wood being as scarce as before, and the weather bitterly cold. I started early next morning, and, on arriving at the *correl*, I saw two men of rather singular appearance, one of them wearing a "sou'-wester," or sailor's hat, and the other a pair of enormous jack-boots, the leather of which reached far above his knees; inside the fence was a ragged Indian boy, milking a cow, and from him the two persons in question were endeavouring to purchase some milk. One of the group hailed me as I came up, and notwithstanding the strange manner in which they were disguised, I discovered two of my old comrades of the volunteers.

"Well, Stevenson," said I; "I certainly had some difficulty in recognising you under this disguise. Surely, you are not going home already."

RANCHE IN UPPER CALIFORNIA.

"Yes, but we are though," was the reply. "We have had a regular sickening of it. We ran out our provisions, and did not make enough by digging to pay our expenses. If we are never to make our fortunes but at the expense of such hard labour, we must be contented to jog on in the old way, and earn an honest crust in some more Christian-like occupation."

I found that these poor fellows had not succeeded half as well as myself, and I resolved to assist them homeward by sharing with them my little stock of provisions and carrying their blankets, with which they seemed to be very much encumbered. They could not prevail upon the Indian to sell them a drop of milk; so, swearing at him lustily, they slaked their thirst in the adjoining stream, and we proceeded on our route.

As we went along, Stevenson related to me some amusing incidents that had occurred to him on his way to the mines. One evening, at the very farm we had just left, he and several other volunteers had met their quondam

Captain N——, who had put up there for the night. Mr. Livermore being at home, supper was served up for the entire party, "Black Jack" included. The latter was unusually polite, and paid great attention to the wants of the men, over whom he had so lately delighted to tyrannise.

"I was determined," said Stevenson, "to be as rude to him as possible, for I hate him from the very bottom of my heart; so I sat down to supper, without ever washing my hands or taking off my 'sou'-wester;' but the captain seemed determined not to take any notice of anything we might say or do, for he felt that he was in awkward hands, and had best keep quiet. He must have been devilishly annoyed though, for he is so very particular, and so confoundedly aristocratic. When he lay down on the floor in his *serapa*, I stretched myself alongside of him, and snored and snorted at such a rate, that I'll be bound he had very little sleep. He was going to the mines, but turned back, as I heard, from a very natural apprehension that had been

growing upon him, that it would not be safe for him to venture amongst the miners, who all knew him well, and wouldn't think it much of a sin to put him out of the way, with a dig of a bowie-knife, or a few slugs. You know he came up to Pueblo for the purpose of trading, or he'd never have ventured so far."

"What sort of business was he engaged in up there?"

"Shortly after the volunteers were disbanded, he bought up a large quantity of sailors' clothing and Government stores that had been condemned as unfit for use, and conveyed them to Pueblo; but I don't think he made much on the lot, for they were all sold by auction. But if it's a fact that the devil takes care of his own, 'Black Jack' is sure to make money somehow or other."

When we reached San José, determined to have a comfortable supper, if possible, and a good supply of provender for my horse, we entered a trading store in the mission, which was kept by a Yankee; and learning from him

that we could here obtain what we wanted, I gave my horse into the charge of an ostler, and we took our seats on some rude benches near the door. There were five or six Californians in the room, bargaining for various articles of dry goods, amongst which were several calico prints of the most glaring designs and colours. I was astonished at the enormous prices they readily paid for these articles, the trader making, in most instances, at least 800 per cent. upon them.

Between the two front doors of the store was a table, around which were seated several Americans and Spaniards playing at *monté*, and staking various sums, from twenty-five cents to four and five ounces of gold, upon a card. I could gather from their conversation that none of them had gone to bed the previous night, and that it was probable they would not quit playing until the banker, or those betting against him, had "burst."[1] But the bank was large, and the dealer evidently no novice; so

[1] A cant term in use amongst the Yankee gamblers.

that the contest promised to be of long duration.

Feeling but little interested in the game, I strolled out into the courtyard to see how my horse had been provided for, when I was agreeably surprised at finding assembled there a group of fresh-looking Yankee girls, chatting and jesting together. They must have come across the mountains, and seemed to have been well taken care of on the route. Having seen my horse fed, I re-entered the store, and was shown into a lofty apartment, where supper had been laid. There was plenty of tea, bread, a few cakes, and a large piece of roast pork, and, to give a greater zest to the repast, one of the merry girls that we had seen presided on the occasion. The viands with which the table was laid out disappeared rapidly under the influence of appetites sharpened by the irregularities of our previous habits; and, although pork in any form had always been abhorrent to me, it would have puzzled the most acute observer to have detected in my countenance or operations the slightest trace of

this deep-seated antipathy. Having satisfied the cravings of my stomach, I had a little more leisure to observe the progress of my companions. I thought Stevenson never would have done. He was pouring down cup after cup of tea in such rapid succession, that every one at the table began to stare at him in wonder. He was stretching out his hand to catch hold of the tea-pot to help himself to the eighth or tenth cup of the liquid, when the Yankee girl, with characteristic smartness, took the things quickly off the table, and we had no option left us but to move.

"'Twixt the cup and the lip," ejaculated Stevenson, with a longing eye after the tea-things, as they were carried off. "A man ought to have the worth of his money, though Venus herself were to make up the deficiency with her smiles; a dollar and a half is too much to pay for a supper like that."

"What!" said I, in amazement, "is it possible that you are not satisfied yet?"

"Satisfied!" he exclaimed; "I feel for all the world like an empty house, out of which

the last tenant has just decamped. Never mind, I'll make up for it when we get to Pueblo."

Our bed that night was unusually comfortable. Stretching ourselves upon some well-shaken, luxurious straw in the stable, where my horse had been placed, we enjoyed a delicious night's repose, to appreciate the sweets of which, obtained as it was on a couch which would be disdained by the lowest menial in our own country, one must have passed through the scenes which had brought us to the conclusion that the softness of the down bed is, after all, but relative enjoyment.

On asking for my bill after breakfast in the morning, I found that I had to pay five dollars, and my companions three each, for the few hours we had remained in the house.

The accommodations in Pueblo are far superior. On reaching that town, we went to a boarding-house, kept in the regular Yankee style by an Irishman named Brannan. It was evening when we got there, and we found assembled round an excellent fire a group of

persons of the most opposite appearance and character, hard-fisted, unshaven, and leather-coated miners, being seated side by side, and on terms of perfect equality, with well-dressed lawyers, surgeons, and mercantile men. The wondrous influence of gold seemed to have entirely obliterated all social distinctions, and a general conversation was kept up, in which every one, no matter how vulgarly he expressed himself, had something to say, and was listened to with attention. In fact, it seemed as if a weather-beaten countenance and soiled and tattered attire formed one's chief claims to consideration. Besides, no man could judge of another's circumstances by his appearance, for it not unfrequently happened that the most wretched-looking and ill-clad persons were those who carried about them the largest share of this world's wealth.

The table kept here was as good and abundant as men long inured to scanty and indifferent fare could desire. My poor steed, however, did not come off quite so well, as it was exceedingly difficult to procure pro-

vender. In the morning I discovered, to my great annoyance, that gold only sold for nine dollars an ounce in the town; and that my supper, breakfast, and lodging for myself and horse, cost me close upon an ounce. This will appear the more exorbitant, when I mention the fact, that I slept on the floor of the room I had first entered, and that my horse had scarcely had three mouthfuls of corn or grass during the night. Bidding farewell to Pueblo, we left under the full conviction that, under the then state of things, boarding-house keepers were more likely to thrive and grow rich than those who delved in the mines.

During the last twelve miles of our journey to Monterey, we were subjected to the pelting of a violent storm of rain, and reached the town thoroughly drenched to the skin. I thanked my stars that I was just in time to escape the horrors of the winter, in the desolate solitudes through which I had just passed, and resolved to keep myself close and comfortable until the following spring.

Directly opposite Abrigo's billiard-rooms, I observed a coffee-house that had been opened since my last visit to the town; and, attracted by its appearance, I entered, to obtain some supper. Fearing the effects of cold from the wetting I had just received, I asked for a glass of brandy. The waiter informed me that there was none in the town.

"Let me have a beef-steak and some coffee, then," said I, passing on into a small room, which was so crowded that I could hardly find a place.

"Where is the milk?" I inquired, when my cup had been filled.

"The cow was killed yesterday, sir, and there's not a drop to be had in the town."

"The devil there's not! What have you got here? nothing but biscuit? Can't you get me some fresh bread?"

"I'm sorry to say I can't, sir. The baker has'nt returned from the mines."

"Have you no butter? — these hard biscuits require something to make them go down." (I was getting dainty!)

"They don't bring us any more butter from the country, sir. The last we had was used up a couple of weeks ago, and we can't get a further supply for love or money."

"What, in the name of wonder, have you, then? You don't expect me to eat the table, I suppose?"

"Oh, dear no! Here's the beef-steak, sir;" and, going to the door, he relieved a grinning nigger of the smoking dish, and slapped it down on the table with emphasis, in order to convince me that the house could still sustain its credit.

"You seem to be on the verge of starvation here, my friend," observed I.

"We have the best supply of any house in the town, sir; but the population has been reduced to great distress, and has sometimes to go whole weeks without beef. The *rancheros* won't drive in the cattle, and there is no regular butcher in the place; so that, if we didn't kill for ourselves, I don't know what we should do. But we'll have some beans to-morrow, and perhaps a few potatoes;

so that, if you come in, you'll have a comfortable dinner."

Tranquillized by the prospect, although somewhat distant, of *beans and potatoes*, I ate my scanty meal in silence, revolving in my mind to what extremities the population would be reduced to next. Had the town been placed in a state of siege, it could not have been driven to greater straits; and, when such ordinary necessaries as bread, butter, and milk, had entirely disappeared, it was more than probable that old boots would soon rise in value as an edible. A cheering perspective, thought I; I might as well have remained in the mountains; but yet, on consideration—no. The rain descended in continuous torrents, and the shelter of a roof had become an essential element of comfort.

CHAPTER XX.

Accommodation for man and beast—The tinman's rise in the world—Relative advantages of San Francisco and Monterey — Future prospects of California — A bad exchange — Jemmy Cullen, the Irish Blacksmith — Might versus right—A black diamond of the first water—Hector Moncrieff's catastrophe.

Upon a gentle declivity, at the rear of the town, stood a log house, consisting of several upper and lower rooms, which had been recently built by a Yankee, but which had been deserted by him as soon as built, under the influence of the general mania which attracted every one to the mines. Ascertaining the name of the person in whose charge it had been left, I hired one of the rooms from him; but it was like hiring the whole house at a nominal rent, as I had it all to myself. I took up my residence there the same night, and, on entering, found that there was no sort of bolt or fas-

tening to the door, a defect which I was obliged to remedy as well as I could by means of a pitchfork and a pile of bricks, which I luckily found ready to my hand. Slinging a hammock that I had just purchased from rafter to rafter of one of the upper rooms, and placing my knapsack, containing my money, under my head, by way of a pillow, I soon fell into a sound sleep, undisturbed by the throes of indigestion; although I must confess to some floating visions of the promised "beans and potatoes" occasionally crossing my brain.

On arising in the morning, my first care was to go down to the livery-stable, where I had left my horse at the moderate charge of a dollar and a half a day. On asking to see him, I was far from satisfied at what I beheld. The poor animal had not a mouthful of hay or corn before him, and I very much question if any had been given him. Working at a bench, at the further end of the stable, was a carpenter, whom I immediately recognised as having served in the volunteers. The floor

of the stable was covered with chips and shavings, and my unfortunate steed was endeavouring to satisfy the cravings of his stomach upon them.

"How do they feed the horses here?" I inquired of the carpenter; "they don't seem to give them any thing to eat."

"Oh yes, they do," replied Chips; "they have their three feeds a day riglar—three wisps of hay, and a promise of oats, which accounts for all the horses being so fat in these here parts. There isn't a bit of corn or grass to be had anywhere else in the town, so that the tinman can lay it on as thick as he pleases."

"And, pray, who is the tinman?"

"The chap that owns these stables, and that large block there, and the store in front. I thought every body knew him. He came here a few years ago—a poor, ragged younker, and took to making tin cups and saucepans to earn a living. Well, you see he lived very close for three or four years, grudging himself the smallest comfort, until he scraped toge-

ther money enough to buy a large stock of liquor and other things, with which he set up a grog and general store. Since then he's been dabbling in every sort of speculation, not forgetting his original calling (for he manufactures tin pans for the use of the miners), and they say he's now one of the richest men in Monterey. There isn't one of these saucepans that he turns out of his shop that doesn't fetch at least four dollars; though the same article could be bought, in any part of the States, for five shillings. He's a hard nut to crack, an' I guess shaves as close to the wind, in a bargain, as the sharpest amongst us Yankees. I'll stick to him, however, until the winter is over, and until I can earn enough to take me back to the mines."

"What are you now doing for him?"

"He's fitting up his house for an hotel and baths, an' I'm doing all the joining work for him. He's always a speculatin'; but I guess he's a little out of his recknin' this time, for San Francisco is going to be the place for business."

Although concurring with my friend the carpenter in his view of the relative superiority of San Francisco, as a field for speculation, I did not altogether agree with him that the prospects of Monterey were to be despised. An immense number of log and plank houses had been erected since my last visit, and the town presented all the evidences of a place likely to increase rapidly in importance. It will form excellent winter quarters for the miners, provided the townspeople have the good sense to take efficient measures for the supply of the town with provisions, which, I presume, for their own sakes, these indolent gentry will do.

I wish I could as readily bring myself to the conviction that the general thirst for the acquisition of gold, and apparent superabundance of the precious metals, are likely to prove of general benefit to the country. The only true and inexhaustible sources of a nation's wealth are, in my opinion, its agricultural and commercial capabilities, and where those natural means are so utterly neglected,

as in the country of which I am writing, its prosperity can be based on no permanent or enduring foundation. There is no doubt that, in the course of time, the continued influx of a more skilful and energetic population might effect a great change in the general face of the country; but if, as I have reason to apprehend, the attraction which draws to its shores such a number of adventurers, should become exhausted in a couple of years, the tide of emigration will become suddenly checked, the spirit of speculation paralyzed, and the thoughts of men directed again towards the homes they have so foolishly left, where, if competition be more keen, and riches more difficult of attainment, the rewards of industry are infinitely sweeter, and the enjoyments of civilized life more than sufficient to compensate for the cares and toils of its duties.

On my way to the coffee-house, I revolved in my mind the expediency of disposing of my horse, and arrived at the conclusion that to keep him any longer, under the circumstances, would be utter folly. It would be

hard enough, after paying ten dollars per week for his support, to find him so reduced in condition, from insufficiency of food, as to be unable to travel in the spring. Chances of disposing of any sort of beast of burden were always to be found at this period. The very same afternoon, on returning from dinner, I met one of the volunteers named Gill, who informed me that, as he was going up to the mines to join his party, he should like to purchase him, adding, that as he was short of money, he would make a "trade" with me, and accordingly offered me thirty dollars and a saddle for him. Finding the saddle an old one, and moreover of the regular Mexican form, which is but little valued amongst the Californians, I refused. He then proposed letting me have a shot gun instead of the saddle, and the same amount of hard cash, which I gladly accepted, the gun, although old, being apparently in good order. In a few days afterwards, Stevenson borrowed the piece from me, and kept it for about a week.

In the mean time, Stevenson and his family

moved into the house in which I now resided, and one evening, desirous of ascertaining the qualities of my new purchase, I examined it in my room, and to my great annoyance found it completely spoiled. One of the hammers would not move, but the other went off with a loud report, the shot entering the ceiling, and knocking down a quantity of plaster. Mrs. Stevenson screamed, the children joined in a general chorus, and for the moment I thought the house had come down about our ears. I never could have imagined that my friend would have been imprudent enough to leave it charged; and I had reason to be thankful that some more serious accident had not occurred to his family, from his culpable negligence. Disgusted with my bargain, I resolved to dispose of it, and offered it to one of Fremont's men, who was in want of a gun. Examining the piece with the air of a connoisseur, he informed me that the person who had sold it me had taken me in, and that it was not worth a cent. Determined, however, not to abandon my purchase thus lightly,

I took it down to Jemmy Cullen, an Irish blacksmith, and the only competent mechanic in the place, to repair. Jemmy said he could put it in *good killing order* for five dollars, so I told him to keep it in his shop, and in the event of my finding a customer, I would give him the job. A person named Springer, who happened to see it in Jemmy's shop, a few days after, took a fancy to it, and was induced by the representations of the latter to give me twenty dollars for it, and to pay the blacksmith, besides, for repairing it. Shortly afterwards, Springer called upon me, and requested me to go down with him to Cullen's.

"I found," said he, "that the scoundrel, instead of putting it in order, as he had undertaken, only made it ten times worse. I had told him to put new dogs on the lock, instead of which, he files off the catch, that holds the trigger at half-cock, and hang me if the thing doesn't now go the full sweep! But I wouldn't mind this, if the fellow had not given me so much impertinence. I merely

said that he had not done what he had undertaken, and that I was far from satisfied, when he flew into a passion, calling me an ugly cross between a nigger and a Yankee, and telling me to make myself scarce. I didn't budge, though he took hold of a crowbar to strike me, for I picked up another that lay within my reach, and we were pretty nearly matched; but what does the cowardly fellow do, on seeing this, but take down a horse-pistol, with a barrel like a blunderbuss, and threaten to blow my brains out, if I did not immediately leave the place. There was no resisting this argument, and I accordingly took myself off. I never saw such a brute, and wouldn't go near him again, if it wasn't that I want to get my gun."

We were by this time at Jemmy's shop, a low shanty close to the landing-place.

"Mr. Cullen," said I, approaching the irascible Hibernian with cautious politeness, "my friend, Mr. Springer here, is desirous that I should look at his gun."

"Don't come in here, you Yankee black-

guard," exclaimed Jemmy, flushing up on perceiving Springer about to enter the smithy; "I'll speak to Mr. R——; but, by the living jingo, if you dare to show your face inside my door, I'll knock you into *smithereens!* Now, just look at the gun, Mr. R., that that ignorant vagabond there says ain't in order. Jist look at it, I ask of you."

"Well, certainly," said I; "it seems to me in excellent *killing* order, but how is it that the triggers will not stop at half-cock?"

"Ay," said Springer, who had remained listening outside, "that's the question; why didn't you put in new dogs, as you promised?"

"Me promise! by jabers, if I hear another word out of your ugly mouth, I'll break every bone in your mane, dirty little body! Ye may take the gun, or lave it, just as it suits you. Thank God, I'm purty independent, and don't want to have any dalins whatsomever with poor people."

Springer, glad to get out of the hands of the irritable Vulcan, paid down the amount

of his demand without any further discussion, and took away his gun. He wanted to return it on my hands, but, knowing that he was about to start for the mines, where firearms of every description fetched almost fabulous prices, I thought myself justified in refusing to take it back. It was lucky for him that I did so; for, on meeting him about six months later, he informed me he had disposed of it for no less a sum than seventy-five dollars.

This incident, trivial as it is, is highly illustrative of the then state of the country. In fact, there was nothing like law or justice in Monterey; and I have known this very individual, (Cullen) when threatened with arrest by the Alcalde, send a message to the effect that he would blow out the brains of the first person who attempted to enter his shop for the purpose. The result was, that he remained perfectly undisturbed in his tenement. The fellow had already realized a small fortune by the mines, being the only mechanic in his line in the town, and readily obtaining his own prices for everything he manufactured.

Sixteen dollars for a pair of spurs, and eight or ten for small picks and crow-bars, were his ordinary charges, so that it is not to be wondered at that he preferred working at iron in Monterey, to digging for gold at the mines. He was, as he himself had stated, "purty independent," and although also pretty insolent betimes, possessed such great physical strength, and such an overbearing temper, that few liked to quarrel with him.

The winter in Monterey is felt very severely by the inhabitants. The rain rushing down the hills that overhang the town, and flowing in torrents through its streets, renders walking out of doors exceedingly disagreeable, if not altogether impossible. At night, when going home, one experiences countless difficulties and dangers, for there is not a solitary lamp to guide the pedestrian on his way; and if he should escape falling into a well, he is certain to find himself up to his knees in some of the gullies or streams that meet him in every direction. Those who can do it endeavour to remain at home at this season, but

I had no home; and every night, as I left the coffee-house, after supper, I was generally drenched to the skin before I reached my *casa* on the hill. The inhabitants, in addition to these annoyances, suffered greatly from the scarcity of provisions until their townsmen returned from the mines, when things resumed their accustomed course, and became comparatively comfortable. The arrival of a small vessel from San Francisco, with some brandy, caused general rejoicing. This liquor sold for fifty cents a glass for several weeks, until a fresh cargo arrived, when the price went down to twenty-five cents, just quadruple the price charged for it in the States.

The news had reached us some time before that several boats' crews had deserted from the American vessels of war, notwithstanding the severe precautions adopted by the Commodore to prevent it. One evening, a runaway negro rode into the yard at the rear of the house where I slept, and, fastening his horse to a stake in the fence, entered the room

where I was seated with Stevenson and his wife, whom he saluted as old acquaintances. The former, after a hearty shake of the hand, hastened to the front door, to see if it was fastened, then looked into the yard, and returned to his seat, apparently reassured.

"Well, Hector," said he, "how have you been getting on?"

"Oh," replied our sable visitor, "I done fust rate. You heerd, I s'pose, dat after I leabe dis 'ere place I go right up to Macalamo diggins. Dere I dig a tremendious sight o' goold in berry few days. How much you tink I make now—eh?"

"I'm sure I can't tell."

"Jist guess."

"Well, somewhere about twenty ounces."

"Haw! haw! twenty ounces! What a clebber chap you be! What tink you ob four tousan' dollars, now—eh?"

"Four thousand dollars!" ejaculated Stevenson, in amazement.

"Four thousand dollars!" echoed his wife,

drawing her chair nearer to Hector, who sat grinning in evident satisfaction at the admiration he had inspired.

"Why, this takes the shine out of them all," said Stevenson; "but you were born lucky, Hector. Had I done what you did, in running away from the Southampton, and carrying off one of her....."

"Hush! Massa Stevenson," interrupted the black, wriggling uneasily on his seat, and casting anxious glances around him; "de less we say about dat de better."

"You need not be alarmed, my good fellow; we are all friends here. I was only going to say, that if I had been in your place, I would have been kicking my heels in irons, and doing penance for my sins on bread and water, instead of looking sleek and hearty, and having lots of tin to spend. There is truth in the proverb, that luck is better than brains," added he, bitterly.

"Ay, ay; dere's someting in luck. But you ain't heerd all."

"Let us have the rest, then, Hector; and

here's a drop of liquor, to clear away the cobwebs from your throat."

"De most astonishingest piece of de bisness are a comin'," continued the nigger. "I war climbin' up a hill, one moonshiny night, to git him a little more firewood, an' a lookin' about for sticks, I see someting a shinin' in de grass. I make a grab at him, tinkin' it war a big lump ob goold. Whenebber I feeled him, him like a stone; and whenebber I looked at him, I couldn't tell what the divil he war. Well, I fetch him back to the camp, an' I keep him till I get to Pibblo, [Pueblo] where I show him to Captin Demmick; an' what you tink he told me him war?"

"Oh, I can't tell. What was it?" said Stevenson.

"Good gracious! what was it?" echoed his helpmate, in growing excitement.

"A dimond ob de fust water," replied Hector, grandly.

"Is it possible!" exclaimed my friend and his wife, in chorus.

"Well, it ain't no less," resumed the negro.

"So, sis I, 'Hector, my boy, you done wid hard work, now: haw! haw! You go into someting large in de spek'lation line. Den you do fust rate in your unnertakins; you send for de little gal you leabe a weepin' out her eyes arter you in New York city, an' make her honest woman.' Soon arter, I meet a Frenchman, a capital good cook, I can tell you, an' him an' me agree to go into de hotel line togedder. We take a big place, to make an eating-house an' liquor store, an' I come down here to buy de stock of liquors an' provisions."

"Well, I am heartily glad of your good fortune," said my friend; "but you had better keep a sharp look-out, Hector, or you'll get nabbed, and have no chance of enjoying your money."

"Oh, dere be no danger ob dat. I so disguised, dat I meet several ob de officers about de town, an' debbil a bit if dey know me. Haw! haw!"

"Do, now, be cautious, Hector," said Mrs. Stevenson; "for it would be a pity that you

should lose your liberty, when you have just got the means of enjoying it."

The black now rose, and bade us good night. He had hardly been gone two minutes, when he returned in a great fright. His horse had been stolen.

Stevenson and he went out together, and having searched the town in every direction, at last found the animal standing at the door of a house in the suburbs, the saddle having been removed from his back. To their peremptory demands for the restoration of both, the Spaniard who had carried them off invariably made use of the ever ready reply, "*No intiende, Señor;*" until my friend took him by the collar, and threatened to bring him before the Alcalde, when he declared, in very good English, that the horse and saddle had been merely borrowed, by a friend of his, to go to a fandango, and that he would have much pleasure in restoring them to the owner.

A few days afterwards, as I was sipping a cup of coffee in Piscaro's billiard-rooms, opposite the quartel, I detected the sable *mil-*

lionaire officiating amongst the waiters; and I subsequently heard that he had been betrayed by one of his own race, and marched off a prisoner to the vessel from which he had deserted, and in which he had discharged the duties of cook, stoutly insisting that he was not himself, but somebody else that bore a strong resemblance to him. The poor fellow received a severe flogging, for which I suspect neither his four thousand dollars in gold, nor his "dimond of the fust water," proved an effective salve.

One evening, shortly after my return to Monterey, I took it into my head to go to a fandango. These parties were numerous during the winter, but usually ended in a fight between the Spaniards and the Americans. Accordingly, on entering the ball-room, I found a motley crowd of persons assembled, amongst whom were several well-dressed females and young men, both Yankee and Californian, and a still greater number of boisterous sailors. Most of them were dancing with great spirit. Two of the young men

GOING TO A FANDANGO.

engaged in the fandango attracted particular attention; one of them, from his extraordinary beauty, and the other from his admirable skill in the dance. They were dressed in calcineros, and, in other respects, in the extreme of the Californian fashion. It struck me that I had seen their countenances before, and at last I felt assured that they were two young ladies from San José. Casting my eyes round the room, I observed a third belonging to the same party, with whose countenance I was somewhat familiar. They were, indeed, none other than the Mazaticas. But who are the Mazaticas? Patience, gentle reader, and you shall know all about them.

During our stay in the lower country, three females, with their *chaperon*, arrived at San José from Mazatlan, and took up their residence in a large bamboo-house on the outskirts of the town. The names by which they were known were Augustina, Warner, Pancho, and Jack Scott. All of them were of Spanish descent. Augustina being a very beautiful girl, Pancho a very fascinating one in manner,

and the others not altogether unattractive, they became the idols of the volunteers, who paid them every attention in their power. But the Spaniards were no less enthusiastic in their admiration of the four charming strangers; and the consequence was, that there were constant bickerings and jealousies about them amongst all the young men in the town. I went one evening with a friend to pay them a visit, and was surprised to find at their house our own orderly sergeant, and a number of Spaniards, amongst whom was Salta Shon, a son of Don Consecos, the Chinese, and who was Augustina's devoted admirer. The sergeant was remarkably attentive to Pancho, engrossing nearly the whole of her conversation, when one of the Spaniards drew a knife, and began flourishing it about. Pancho, who spoke a little English, beckoned the former aside, and gave him a friendly caution.

"*Cuidado!*" said she; "what por you no carry a *cuchillo?*"

The sergeant was unarmed, but being a

brave, manly fellow, went up to the Spaniard, and asked him what he meant. The latter replied only with an oath, and two or three thrusts of the weapon. The sergeant's great coat was cut in several places, though he received only a slight wound on the side. The number of Spaniards increasing, we thought it best to retreat; but next day the sergeant and a small party of the volunteers, armed with clubs and pistols, went in pursuit of this man, but he had left the town, where he was never afterwards seen until the excitement had subsided.

The expression made use of by Pancho became quite a familiar one throughout the garrison, and never afterwards did we caution each other in any other terms than "*Cuidado* por yourself; what por you no carry a *cuchillo?*" which, being given in the *naïve* manner of the girl herself, never failed to create a hearty laugh.

Inquiring why one of these females went by the *sobriquet* of Jack Scott, I was informed that that person was her great favourite

amongst the *Americanos*. Jack Scott was her *beau ideal;* and, as she never failed to mention his name in conversation, some of our boys had thus christened her; but who or what the object of her admiration was I never was able to ascertain.

These four females had come up with the refugees on board the vessels of war from Lower California.

As soon as the dance was over, I approached Augustina, and said—

"*Quiere usted fumar, caballero?*" at the same time offering her a Havana cigar.

I thought this would have disconcerted her, but she took the cigar, and smoked it with the *sang froid* of a Dutchman. Well, said I, if that won't do, I will try another experiment; and accordingly, after a few words of conversation on general subjects, asked her if she would have *un vaso de aguardiente*. But again was I surprised—the lovely creature, true to her assumed character, tossing off the contents without the slightest hesitation.

One of the volunteers, to whom I mentioned

the fact of these girls being in the room in disguise, proposed that we should go to the residence of old Maraquita, another of the women from the lower country, with whom we were acquainted, and obtain from her the loan of some female dresses, so as to carry out the joke. This we were accordingly about to do, when a couple of well-dressed gamblers and three of the sailors, getting a hint of our project, resolved to share in the fun, and followed us pretty closely. My companion and I got into Maraquita's house, and had just borrowed a couple of dresses, when the party was heard outside demanding admittance. But Donna Matilda, the old lady's eldest daughter, had locked the door, and refused to give them admittance. The sailors burst in the door, smashing the lock to pieces, and we thereon declared that we would not return to the fandango. The two gamblers reproaching these men for their conduct, a general "rough and tumble" fight ensued in the street, which nearly proved fatal, as one of the sailors drew a loaded pistol, and was with difficulty pre-

vented from firing it at his opponents. At length, however, the quarrel was settled, and we proceeded to our respective homes.

This practice of the women disguising themselves in male attire is not by any means confined to females of easy character. On several occasions, I detected married Spanish women of unblemished reputation dressed in male costume at these fandangos, and was amused to observe the jealous watchfulness with which they regarded their husbands. One evening, Lieutenant Y—— and I being at one of these boisterous *réunions*, discovered, in a very dashing, manly-looking person, a lady with whom he was intimately acquainted. Her husband was engaged in an animated flirtation with Pancho, and she seemed dreadfully excited, her eyes flashing with rage. Happening to turn round and perceive that the Lieutenant recognised her, she rushed out of the house. "Thank Heaven," said I to myself, "that I am not in that gentleman's shoes! When he gets home, he'll find that he has caught a Tartar."

I have thought it advisable to introduce

these little incidents, in order to give my readers a correct idea of the general state of society in the town at this period. Occasionally, of course, the better classes gave a ball, which passed off creditably, and led to no unpleasant results; but these were rare exceptions.

CHAPTER XXI.

Horse-stealing—An execution—A lucky escape—Penal laws of Mexico—Gambling at Monterey—"The California" steamer and her passengers—Nice pickings for speculators—The gambling-fever at its climax—Trading with a vengeance—The mysterious dozen—Sign-painting more curious than profitable—Resolution to repair to San Francisco—The death-bed of a murderer—His orphan—Mr. Graham and "The Revolution of 1836"—The usual reward of patriotism—The long-expected vessel—Her captain and crew—The voyage—Arrival at San Francisco.

Towards the close of the winter, an event occurred which threw the whole population into a state of great excitement. The circumstances were these:—

A notorious horse-stealer, a semi-Indian, having committed several remarkably daring robberies, was at last apprehended, found guilty by a jury composed chiefly of his own countrymen, and sentenced by the Alcalde—according to the laws of Mexico—to be hanged.

But the Americans in the place, already disgusted with Mexican law, and strongly opposed to the infliction of so severe a punishment, convened a meeting in the school-house, with a view to prevent, if possible, the execution of the criminal. It was attended by a goodly number of influential Yankees, numerous volunteers, and a fair proportion of Spaniards.

The case was argued *pro* and *con*, with considerable eloquence and force. The infliction of the extreme penalty was denounced by the speakers of the opposition, as being, in the first place, contrary to the spirit of a humane system of legislation; secondly, in contradiction with the merciful principles inculcated by the Christian religion; and lastly as too severe a punishment for the offence. The speakers on the other side urged that a severe example was absolutely necessary to check crime in the then state of California; for if an undue indulgence were shown to men who committed excesses of this nature, there would result—in the absence of a settled government, of police, of prisons, of all order, in a country

almost in a state of anarchy—the most fearful crimes, and the most barefaced and wanton depredations. To prevent such evils, the most severe measures should be adopted, for malefactors could not be permitted to wander about at liberty, to heap crime upon crime; life and property must be preserved and protected against their vicious inclinations, and the law must be upheld, or it would lose its salutary influence.

These arguments, backed by several allusions to the custom of appealing to Lynch law, in places where no regularly-constituted tribunals existed, produced a sensation adverse to the object of the meeting. But the opposition party, changing their tactics, insisted that the trial was an illegal one; as two or three persons on the jury were known to entertain hostile feelings towards the prisoner, having at various times been injured by him. One of these persons, moreover, had been heard to express a desire of being revenged upon the criminal; and these circumstances, it was urged, were sufficient—even according

to the laws of Mexico, which they, however, refused to recognise—to invalidate the trial.

The love of fair play carried the day, after a protracted and stormy discussion, which terminated by the adoption of an appeal to Governor Mason, soliciting him to order a postponement of the execution. As this had been arranged to take place on the following morning, a deputation was appointed to wait upon the Governor, who, after considerable delay and difficulty, replied, that he could not interfere with the Alcalde in the performance of his duty; but if he chose to accede to the request of the deputation, he (the Governor) had no objection. Accordingly, the deputation proceeded to the Alcalde; but he had gone into the country for the day; most likely, to evade the importunities of the American party.

Violence was now generally anticipated; and the prisoner was in consequence taken up to the fort on the hill, and the guard over him doubled.

Next morning, crowds of men, women, and

children, Americans and Californians, were assembled at the place of execution, some hours before the appointed time. A gibbet of great height had been erected at the further end of the stream, near the church; but two out of a band of the volunteers forced their way to it, broke down the steps, and destroyed various parts of the structure. They would doubtless have demolished the whole, had not a reinforcement of soldiers arrived: these men, after driving the rioters away at the point of the bayonet, procured a carpenter, who forthwith repaired the damage, without further interruption.

At length the culprit made his appearance, amidst the deepest silence, but also amidst intense excitement, though it appeared not on the surface. He was a stout, heavy man, having his face and figure hidden under a dark cloth. He mounted the steps of the scaffold with much apparent firmness, and the rope being passed over his head, and adjusted round his neck, the board was taken from beneath his feet, and he fell—to the ground!

The rope had broken, and the culprit, instead of finding himself in another world, discovered himself standing in the midst of an anxious crowd of spectators, with the Alcalde close beside him.

There followed a great outcry for the "padre," who, in the person of a priest named Ramarez, made his appearance in the course of a few minutes, and proceeded to deliver himself of a most impressive homily, addressed to the astonished prisoner, whom I expected to see strung up again, as soon as a new rope should be forthcoming. I was mistaken, however. The accident—if such it was—is provided for by the Mexican law, and stands the culprit in lieu of a free pardon. The horse-stealer, therefore, walked away and, although black in the face, and swollen in the eyes and forehead, into which the blood had started, seemed as much surprised as pleased at his escape, as well he might be.

I never understood the particulars of this fortunate accident, but strongly suspected that the Alcalde, fearing the violence of the Ame-

ricans, or desirous of conciliating them, without any self-compromise, had given the necessary instructions to the officials, who gave the rope a nick, and thus fulfilled the law, and saved the dignity of their superior.

There was an unusual amount of gambling carried on in Monterey during this winter; attributable, no doubt, to the superabundance of gold which had flowed in from the mines. The presiding genius of this mania, at Abrigo's, was a Mr. C——, the most inveterate gamester of all the Americans in the country. He was a highly amusing fellow, who won and lost his money in the most off-hand, spirited manner, appearing equally satisfied whether Fortune smiled or frowned upon him. He proved, in consequence, an immense favourite with all. He was one of the very best billiard-players I have ever met with, and was never so happy as when engaged in playing that game, or *monté*. His chief peculiarity, however, was an extraordinary propensity for swearing; his vocabulary of oaths comprising the very choicest selection — Yankee, English, and

Spanish; some of them of the quaintest kind, and rising to his tongue on every possible occasion.

One day, all the inhabitants of the town rushed together in a crowd to the port, to witness the arrival of a huge steamer which had appeared in the offing; the largest that had passed along this coast, and, as I understood, the first into the bargain. The Californians gazed at it in silent wonderment, not at all able to comprehend how it could have been constructed of such a size; how it could be made to go without sails; where all the smoke it cast out of its huge funnel came from; and how the large fire in its inside did not burn the vessel up.

She was the California, the first of the new American line steamers; and, having cast anchor and landed her passengers, Abrigo's coffee-house presented, in the course of a few hours, such a scene as perhaps could not be witnessed in any other country but this, and that under the peculiar circumstances of its then position.

As far as appearances went, a finer looking or a more respectable body of emigrants never stepped ashore from any vessel; but I venture to affirm there never landed at Monterey a shrewder or a "smarter" set, or their match at gambling, with all its accompanying vices. At faro, *monté*, indeed, at any game of cards, they appeared quite in their element; and the Spaniards, though sharp enough, were mere children in this respect, compared to them. Several had brought roulette-tables, "sweat-cloths," and dice, and banks were immediately established, on every available spot. Even the billiard-tables were, for the time, diverted from their original use, and devoted to *rouge-et-noir*, and such like games of chance, at which the dealers soon realized enormous sums in gold, receiving it in lumps and in ounces, according to the kind. There was scarcely a device common to gamblers which was not brought into active practice; and many new tricks and games I had never seen played before were on this occasion introduced for the first time in California.

Meanwhile, and in the midst of the excitement of play, numerous other individuals from on board the vessel were endeavouring to acquire money by legitimate trading. All sorts of articles were offered for sale at enormous prices. Shoes, hats, baskets, bowie-knives, handkerchiefs, spades, shovels, picks, and crow-bars, biscuit and flour, cheese, and beef and pork, confectionary and spices, tobacco and snuff, and spirits and wine—in fact, every kind of merchandise seemed to have been landed in minute quantities, expressly to tantalize purchasers, to raise an extra demand, and consequently to augment prices. One particularly shrewd fellow had a dozen of the commonest sort of bowie-knives, which he offered at the modest sum of five dollars each; and, having readily disposed of them, renewed the operation with another dozen, and another, and another, until he had realized a handsome sum. But he never appeared with more than a dozen at a time, as his whole stock in trade; and, as he never made his appearance twice in the same place, nobody seemed the wiser, his

miraculous dozen being renewed as fast as it went off.

Another man greatly amused me by driving bargains for his wearing apparel; and I am afraid to say how many times he stripped and reappeared clad anew, to sell his garments again, before he was satisfied. In a word, there was but one cry, but one all-absorbing thought —"Money, money, money!"

To add to the bustle of this bewildering scene, the rush to C——'s refreshment-store, established at the bar of the coffee-house, was perfectly appalling. The *habitués* of the place were neglected for the new-comers; and, on one hungry townsman appealing to C—— for a piece of pie, I heard the latter exclaim—

"Pie! Pie! For God's sake, don't ask me for pie to-day! The inhabitants of the town will, I hope, forget themselves to-day, and give the strangers a chance."

How far the keen-witted host forgot himself may be inferred from the fact, that in two days he cleared upwards of two thousand

dollars by his refreshments, and by the hire of the gambling-rooms.

As an illustration of the spirit of gambling which prevailed, I may mention the case of one of the new-comers, the cook of the California, known by the name of "English Ned." This man was a bold gamester, who would coolly stake his all on the cast of a die, the turn of a card, or the stroke of a cue. The first day, he played at two American banks, and won eighteen hundred dollars; the next, he lost all, and in the evening returned on board with a dun at his heels for a couple of ounces of gold.

Some of these old gamesters frequently made enormous "hits," and as frequently sustained ruinous losses. But I observed that they who really carried away the most, were sundry quiet-looking fellows, with sharp eyes, who watched the chances, betted enormously, but warily, upon a run of luck on any particular card or colour, and went away when they had won a sufficiency for that sitting. Some, however, who knew that "keeping the bank" was a safe game, speculated in this manner

with their winnings, and doubled and trebled them in a very short time.

Another of the strangers whom I more particularly remarked, was a tall, fair-haired Yankee, who went by the name of John as a surname, being always called Mr. John. He started one of the new Yankee gambling-banks, as I have reason to remember, having been tempted, by the force of the general example and of familiar associations, to try my chances at his table. That day I won twenty-five dollars at *monté*, all of which I lost on the morrow, with ten dollars more. I thereupon resolved not to play again; a resolution which, as I subsequently discovered, was far easier to come to than to keep, so strong were the incentives to this species of indulgence, and so contaminating the influences by which I was surrounded.

The California remained five days in the roadstead, during which time I ascertained that the emigrants—who were bound to San Francisco—were, the majority of them, professed gamblers from the Southern States,

particularly from New Orleans: a singular class of men to settle a new country. When they were gone, the town resumed its wonted dullness and tranquillity.

At this period, gold of the finest quality fetched only eleven dollars per ounce, so that I lost considerably in converting mine into coin. The people expressed their anxious desire to see a United States' Mint established, but Congress moved but tardily in the consideration of Californian affairs; and, failing this very necessary protection, the miners were left entirely at the mercy of the grasping cupidity of the traders — a state of things which gave rise to much discontent.

As my means were now rapidly diminishing, I found myself obliged to turn my attention to some practical occupation, by pursuing which—in accordance with the spirit of activity that prevailed amongst the great mass of the people—I might hope to earn a livelihood. Portrait-painting — in which I had attained some proficiency by years of study and practice — was out of the question, as

neither canvass nor properly prepared colours were obtainable in the country. I therefore resolved to adopt a lower branch of the art, and endeavour to procure employment as a letterer and sign-painter, at which I had already tried my hand on my voyage out, and with no inconsiderable success. With some difficulty I procured a small quantity of lamp-black, yellow ochre, vermillion, and burnt sienna, and painted a sign; the first picture-sign, probably, that the country had ever produced, and certainly the first which the Californians themselves had ever seen, judging from the impression it created. It was sufficiently fanciful for its purpose, the centre consisting of an easel and a bust of Apollo, with a palette and pencils; the whole surrounded by a wreath of flowers; whilst the various branches of the art, in which I considered that I excelled, were indicated by an abundance of lettering of different styles, arranged tastefully in appropriate places. Crowds gathered about my sign, which they gazed at, wondered at, and laughed at; some of

them admired, praised, and returned to inspect and criticise it anew, or to gratify their curiosity by staring at it. I made up my mind, that so much interest could not possibly be manifested, nor abate, without my deriving some solid advantage from it, and I determined — building upon the future — that, whilst I would not demand an exorbitant sum of my customers, that is, exorbitant for California, I would, nevertheless, profit by my monopoly, and make the Californians pay a reasonable price for their new whistle. Alas for human ambition and calculation! I soon discovered that Monterey was no place for a sign-painter; and, growing wearied of waiting for patrons, I resolved to proceed to San Francisco by the earliest opportunity; for I had recently heard the most favourable accounts of its prosperity and growing importance, and now anxiously looked out for the first vessel that should be bound thither.

It did not make its appearance, however, for a considerable time, condemning me, by the delay, to a long and wearisome period of

inaction and discomfort, from which there was no escape; although I strove to relieve the monotony of such an existence by repairing, day after day, to a height, from which I could overlook the roadstead, and where I stood watching for the expected ship, as though, by so doing, her voyage could be abridged.

One day, on my way down to the familiar spot, as I was passing along the street leading to the house of a Mr. Larkins, I was called in to witness the dying agonies of a person who was said to have murdered his wife in the lower country.

His ghastly form, attenuated by disease, long-suffering, and mental disquietude, lay extended upon a wretched bed, his life-stream evidently fast ebbing away. Beside it stood his daughter, an interesting child, of about ten years of age; she was offering him a cup, the contents of which he did not evince the slightest desire to taste. The poor girl, nevertheless, pressed it upon him with the tenderness so peculiar to the female sex, even at this early age.

"Now do, father, there's a dear," she said, in a soothing, coaxing tone of voice; "it will do you good, I'm sure it will." And, as she uttered these words, her hot tears fell upon his pillow, and wetted his face.

The dying man opened his eyes, and stared fixedly at her a few seconds, then closed them again.

"Come, father, dear, do try now," exclaimed the poor child once more, wiping away with the hand that was free the tears which had fallen on his cheek, whilst she strove to check her sobs. But perceiving that he stirred not, she turned round to me, and said, "Oh, sir, I am afraid father's very ill, this time. He's never been so bad before."

I could not witness this affecting scene unmoved; and, as I stood gazing upon it, and watching the gentle affection with which this poor child ministered to the wants of her mother's murderer, I wondered whether, in the lucid intervals of that man's long agony, his child's love had awakened his conscience to repentance for his fearful crime, or to an

appreciation of the miseries and the opprobrium which it had entailed upon her. I foresaw for her—for her, the murderer's daughter—a life of neglect, disgrace, and shame. No loveliness of form or of feature, no chastity of conduct, no mental excellence, would remove the brand of crime from her name. A heartless and undiscriminating world would point the finger of Scorn at her as she passed on her way, and render her the victim of her parent's crimes. Oh, how I did pity that poor innocent girl, whose very unconsciousness of the anguish in store for her but rendered her the more an object of commiseration! Yet, as I reflected on her forlorn condition, I could not renounce faith in an all-protecting Providence, which alone, I felt, could raise up for this little girl some kind Christian friend to provide for her in this wild country, and to preserve her, amongst so many lawless beings, from the vices and crimes incidental to such an association. I saw that she expected me to reply to her remark respecting her father's danger; for her eyes were full of

tears, and her earnest gaze remained fixed upon me.

"I am afraid he is, my poor child," I said.

"Oh, sir, he *has* suffered so!" she resumed, sobbing as she wiped her eyes; "but I would rather hear him groan, than see him lie so still." Here she bent her face close to his; and, kissing him on the cheek, again addressed him in a low but agonized voice.

"Father, father," she repeated, "do look at me, there's a dear father."

The murderer suddenly cast his right arm up with convulsive force; then, clenching his fist, and letting his hand fall again on the coverlet, he grasped it as if he would tear it into shreds. The agony lasted but a moment or two, however; for he again opened his eyes, and stared vacantly at his daughter, but without making any sign of recognition. He did not close them again; and, although they glared with an almost fierce brightness for a few seconds, it was with the glassy brilliancy of dissolution; and, when it had faded away, he was dead. He had expired without a

groan, almost without a struggle; and his little daughter still stood looking at him, unconscious of his end.

No one spoke, for we knew how it was, and felt overawed in the presence of Death. The girl first broke silence.

She remained, with her eyes riveted upon her father's face, and holding the cup which she had offered him. Perceiving that he did not move, and that a strange and incomprehensible change had taken place, she bent down to him quickly, and laid her cheek against his — for the bed was a very low one — then placed her hand on his breast, which was bared. She now understood the great change that had taken place in him; and never shall I forget the agonizing sob that burst from her, as, letting the cup fall on the floor, she sank down by his side, half kneeling, half crouching, and exclaimed:

"Oh, my God! He's dead! And I am quite alone!"

It was indeed a piteous spectacle to witness the deep anguish of that poor orphan; but

there was a good Samaritan by the bedside, who removed her from the chamber of death to his own home, and who subsequently exerted himself to discover some tidings of her friends in the States, though I never heard with what success. It was well she was taken out of the house in which her father died; for she was spared witnessing a demoniac orgie held that night over his corpse by the depraved and abandoned men with whom he had associated. Nevertheless, his remains were respectably interred, and an impressive discourse delivered over his grave by the Reverend Walter Colton.

During the protracted stay I was obliged to make in the town, I enjoyed frequent opportunities of cultivating the acquaintance of Mr. Graham, a Tennessean hunter and backwoodsman, who, by his bravery and characteristic love of independence, has inscribed his name in the history of California. Several years previously, he had come over the Rocky Mountains, and was one of the oldest American settlers in the country. Age, as Mr.

Farnham observes of him, in his work, appeared to have made but little impression upon his erect and powerful frame, and he seemed as active and as capable of enduring fatigue as old Leather-stocking himself. He had been mixed up with the first political movements of the Americans in California, and took an active part in the Revolution of 1836, as it is called.

At that period, General Echuandra was Commandant-General of the country. He was a man, it seems, of a most grasping and mercenary disposition, committing the grossest peculations, and defrauding the revenues and the people to a ruinous extent. No wonder, then, that great discontent prevailed, and that public indignation should be aroused, and be ready to burst forth on the very first occasion. The crisis at length arrived. A vessel having just come into the roadstead of Monterey, the General—as was his practice—placed a guard on board. To this proceeding the officers of the vessel objected, and deputed a clerk, one Juan Baptise Alvarado by name, to

wait upon the Commandant, and to inform him that they regarded it as an insult and an imputation on their probity, inasmuch as it was implying that they sought to evade the payment of duties. The General ordered the envoy to be put in irons; but he contrived to effect his escape, and, starting off to Graham, who resided at San Juan, obtained a promise of assistance in carrying out a plan he had conceived, of declaring the country independent of Mexico. A meeting of all the foreigners was accordingly held, at the head of whom Mr. Graham placed himself; and, the project meeting with general approbation, the party marched boldly and suddenly upon Monterey, took the fort, drove out the Commandant and his partisans, declaring Alvarado Governor in his stead, and California independent. But this state of things did not continue long, for the new Governor—who doubtless had sought only his own aggrandizement—was partly cajoled, partly frightened, by the central Government, into an act of adhesion to Mexico, and was thenceforward

denominated Constitutional Governor of Upper California. Graham and his party fared, under these circumstances, as most other patriots have fared, when they have served the turn of those who know how to convert such men into the instruments of their ambition: they were treated with the blackest ingratitude, subjected to much petty annoyance and oppression, and a feeling of hostility excited against them and the foreigners—as the Yankees were called—which exists even to this day, and which they can only hope to subdue by endeavouring to overcome the strong prejudices of the natives, and proving to them that henceforward the interests of the two races are identical.

With the spring and its verdure came a brig into the harbour of Monterey, bound for San Francisco. I resisted the entreaties of a large party of volunteers who were about to set out for the mines, and wished me to join them; for my determination was—if I went gold-hunting again—to try my fortune in some of the upper "diggins," which I could

easily reach by the Sacramento river. San Francisco, therefore, was my goal; so I sent my effects on board the brig, and secured my passage, although we were still delayed in the roadstead for an entire week beyond the time appointed for her to sail, in consequence of the great difficulty of finding men to work the vessel. At last, four men were shipped, at the rate of fifty dollars each for the voyage—which, being only a seven days' run, I thought very handsome pay—and we set sail, encountering at our outset the usual trade wind, a bitter north one, that blows in one direction, almost without variation, for six months out of the twelve. On this occasion it was, of course, dead in our teeth.

But surely never was there such a brig, nor such a crew. She belonged to some Monterey people, and had been detained on her voyage home. If, when she had got safely back to this port, her owners had condemned her as unseaworthy, they would only have been doing their duty, and manifesting a due regard for life and property. But I suppose they thought

less of risk of this kind, than of the small fortune they might realize by employing her—crazy as she was—to run up and down the Sacramento river with freight and passengers, as long as her timbers held together. As for her crew, they—with the exception of one man besides the captain—knew as little about the brig as she knew about them; and, only for the serious consequences likely to ensue from their ignorance, their mistakes would have been highly ludicrous, as they floundered about, handling ropes, the names of which were so many puzzles to them, and striving to execute orders which they could not by any possibility comprehend, in spite of the oaths that accompanied them. On two or three occasions, we were in imminent danger of being lost, so literally were they at sea in everything relating to the working of the vessel. The captain himself, by no means a pleasant-tempered man, even when he was supposed to be in a good humour, had enough to do, with his one seaman, to keep the ship in her course. He was a rough, hard-featured old

fellow, who always spoke in a growl, and with an oath, and paid such unremitting attention to the brandy-bottle, that he was in a constant state of inebriety, and just as unsteady in his movements as the crazy vessel under his command. Nevertheless, he contrived to take frequent observations; to issue his directions; to keep the four men in dread of him; and, as much by luck as by the working out of a series of problems jotted down in chalk on a black board, and which were intended to represent the ship's course and her ultimate destination, finally to bring his craft to San Francisco; the port of which we entered on the morning of the 3rd of April, 1849, being the eighth after our departure from Monterey.

I have often thought of that memorable voyage, and to this very hour wonder by what lucky combination of chances we succeeded in getting to San Francisco. Considering all things, I should not have been more surprised had we made Cape Horn.

CHAPTER XXII.

Our entry into the Bay of San Francisco—The Strait—The Bay—Its beautiful situation—Description of the Bay—Pueblo and Suissoon Bays—Former insignificance of San Francisco—The discovery of the gold mines—The voice of Mammon—The change—The town of San Francisco as it appears from the Bay—The Island of Goats—Sacramento city—The route by water—Some particulars concerning Sacramento city—Ground-rents—The "red woods" of Pueblo—Their peculiarities.

From the magnificent descriptions I had heard of the celebrated Bay of San Francisco, I experienced no inconsiderable degree of disappointment when we entered the narrow gap in the coast-land which opens into its waters, and which did not appear to me to be more than a hundred feet in width. This opening, as seen from the ocean, presents the complete appearance of a simple mountain-pass — abruptly cutting in two the continuous line of

the coast range—and is the only water communication hence to the interior country. The coast itself is of the boldest character, and of singular beauty in respect of distinctness of outline. The mountains bounding it on the south extend in the form of a narrow range of broken hills, terminating in a precipitous headland, against which the surges break angrily, casting up millions of briny spangles, which glisten in the sunbeams with all the varied colours of the rainbow. To the north, these mountains rear their huge crests —like so many granitic Titans—in a succession of varying altitudes, until, at the distance of a few miles, they attain an elevation of from two thousand to three thousand feet, the seaward point presenting a bold promontory, between which and the lower headland lies the strait I have already mentioned, and which, although appearing so narrow, on account of the immense bulk of mountain forming its shoulders, is nevertheless one mile broad in the narrowest part.

Having passed through this gap, or I might

more properly call it a gate, we found the strait to extend quite five miles from the sea to the Bay itself, which then opens right and left, extending in each direction about thirty-six miles, its total length being more than 70 miles, with a coast-line of about 275. The land on each side of the strait is irregular and picturesque, resembling, on account of its continuity, an immense bank, which forms an admirable natural protection against the fierce winds that frequently sweep the coast with unmitigated fury.

Proceeding up the strait, we found the real or second entrance to the Bay barred by an enormous rock, which offers a capital site for a fort. To the left of it, in an embrasure of the land, lay the flag-ship Ohio, which, seen from this distance, appeared like a miniature man-of-war, several others of lesser dimensions, but of the same character, being dotted about here and there, at convenient anchorages. I learned that these vessels had taken up their position at this spot—although inconveniently distant from the town—with a

view to render desertion on the part of the men more difficult; for the mines, it seems, possessed such powerful attractions, that many of the boats' crews had abandoned their vessels to go gold-hunting; and it had been found extremely difficult to restrain even the officers, a considerable number of whom had yielded to the temptation.

Having passed this huge rock, which rises sheer out of the water to a considerable height, and may be some 60 or 100 feet in breadth, the Bay of San Francisco burst upon us in all its beauty; and, excited as my imagination had been by the numerous descriptions I had heard of it, I was unprepared for the magnificent scene which presented itself to my view, as our crazy vessel glided sluggishly over its placid waters.

Its first aspect is that of a long lake, lying embosomed between parallel ranges of mountains, in the midst of a country of Alpine character; but the eye, soon accustoming itself to dissect the beautiful landscape, perceives that the monotony of its glassy surface

is broken and varied, and rendered eminently picturesque, by the several islands with which it is studded, and which rise to the height of from 300 to 400 feet; preserving in the main the bold and rugged character of their parent shores; some being mere masses of rock, whilst others are luxuriantly clad with a mantle of the very richest verdure, bespotted with flowers of the gaudiest hues.

Immediately opposite the entrance to the Bay, and forming a back-ground of unsurpassed majesty of appearance, rises, at a few miles distant from the shore, a chain of mountains, which shoot aloft to an elevation of two thousand feet above the level of the water, and whose summits are crowned by a splendid forest-growth of ancient cypress, distinctly visible from the Pacific, and presenting a conspicuous landmark for vessels entering the Bay. Towering behind these, again, like the master-sentinel of the golden regions which it overlooks, is the rugged peak of Mount Diablo, rearing its antediluvian, granite head, hoar with un-

melted snows, to the height of 3,770 feet above the level of the sea.

The immediate shores of the Bay are known by the name of *contra costa* (the counter, or opposite coast), this designation being derived from their proximity and opposite relation to the sea. Their character is varied, presenting a front of broken and rugged hills, rolling and undulating lands, and rich, alluvial shores, having in their rear fertile and wooded ranges, admirably adapted as a site for towns, villages, and farms; with which latter they were already dotted. The foot of the mountains around the southern arm of the Bay is a low, alluvial bottom-land, extending several miles in breadth, being interspersed with and relieved by occasional open woods of oak, and terminating, on a breadth of twenty miles, in the fertile valley of San Josef.

A narrower examination of the Bay shows that it is divided by straits and projecting points, or small promontories, into three distinct bays, that of San Francisco being, of

course, the principal, whilst the two others, which both lie in a north north-easterly direction, are called respectively the San Pueblo and Suissoon, or Sooson, as it is commonly pronounced. These are connected by a strait, that of Carquines, about one mile in width, and from eight to ten fathoms deep, with a strong and rapid current, which renders the navigation somewhat difficult. These bays are fringed by small valleys opening into the adjacent country; and some of the streams have a short launch-navigation, through the medium of which produce is conveyed to the Bay.

The Suissoon is, moreover, connected with an expansion of water formed by the confluence of the Sacramento with the San Joachin, both of which enter the Bay of San Francisco in about the same latitude as the mouth of the Tagus at Lisbon; the valleys of the San Joachin and Sacramento forming their junction with the Bay by a delta of some twenty-five miles in length, divided into islands by deep channels, into the mouths of

which the tide flows; so that these two rivers discharge their waters into the Bay together, forming only one stream.

From this general, but, I believe, accurate description of this celebrated Bay, it will be perceived that, unlike the majority of bays, it is not a simple indentation of the coast, but a little Mediterranean in itself, having bold shores and a fertile country adjacent, and being connected with the ocean by a gate of rock, or a strait, of not more than one mile and a half at its greatest width; then suddenly opening out, as soon as it is past, into an expanse of between seventy and eighty miles, completely landlocked, with an average breadth of from ten to fifteen miles, the head of the Bay being distant from the sea nearly forty miles, at which point commences its connexion with the noble and beautiful valleys of the San Joachin and Sacramento.

I may add of it, that the water at the entrance and inside of it is of a depth sufficient to admit the largest vessels that were ever constructed, which can ride here in perfect

safety in all kinds of weather; whilst the extent of the harbour would accommodate all the navies in the world, with room to spare. A more approachable harbour, or one offering greater security, is unknown to navigators.

At the time I speak of — although, but a short period before, its waters were comparatively unfrequented — I beheld its glistening surface crowded with vessels of all dimensions, and from various countries; so vast and important a change had the discovery of the golden treasures entombed in the remote and rugged ravines of the Sacramento and San Joachin, wrought for San Francisco Bay. It seemed as if a century in its history had been anticipated by the stroke of some all-potent magician's wand, or by the power of some spell of irresistible force; and that, under their influence, it had become in a moment a centre of attraction to the living world. For ages had those huge mountains held their vast riches undisturbed by man; for ages had the waters from their granite sides washed the valleys at their feet, leaving, in their hurried

track to the sea, the glittering grains which they had pilfered in their course from the springs of wealth hidden in the heart of the rock; for ages had those grains glistened in the broad sunshine, or lain at the bottom of the clear torrents, looking upward towards the day; for ages had the wild Indians—the masters of this solitary region — wandered over hills and valleys, teeming with the riches worshipped by the nations of the East, and, unconscious of their treasures, continued to hunt the deer and the beasts of the plain and the forest, content to live only for the day: the Spaniard, too, and his descendants, greedy of gold, and relentless in its pursuit, whose foot-prints in the western world, from first to last, had left a bloody stain—even these had failed to plunge into the hidden mysteries of the golden valleys; and civilization seemed doomed to follow its slow course westward, till, in the lapse of ages more, the enterprise of man should overleap the Rocky Mountains and the range of everlasting snows, and unfurl the ban-

ner of progress on the shores of San Francisco.

But suddenly — almost in a night, as it would seem—the silvery waters of the Bay are alive with fleets, spreading their white canvass to the breeze, as, laden with a living freight of anxious men, and with the produce of distant and civilized climes, they glide on their silent way towards the golden gates of this treasure-gorged region. A voice has gone forth that here is to be found the idol which all men worship; and Mammon summons his followers to his shrine. The summons peals like thunder through the gorges of the mountains, and spreads far and wide over the plains. Quickly is the response taken up; and now it rings loud above the din of the thrift-seeking multitudes in the bustling cities of the Western World—startling Learning and Science from their deep reveries; Husbandry from its labours; plodding Industry from her peaceful occupations; awakening Ambition from its restless sleep; inspiring Commerce with freshened energies; arousing Speculation

from its forced repose, and quickening its brain to scheme and to devise: into every ear that loud voice rings the name of Mammon. It stays not for times nor seasons; mountains and waters check it not. Over the broad Atlantic it sweeps, gathering strength with every fresh gust of the tempest; bearing its grateful tidings to the remotest corners of the earth, and gladdening hearts crushed by the weight of toil and despair. To the wealthy, but still grasping trader, to the prisoner in his cell, the pauper on his straw, and the breadless thousands to whom employment cometh not, and death but rarely too soon, it brings alike hope, energy, and new-born activity.

Quick as the light which turns the darkness into day, the phantom-voice travels the wide world round, until once more it sweeps over the Bay from whence it issued. All is bustle and confusion where once the stillness of nature reigned. The golden valleys are alive with men, prostrate at the worship of their idol. A city has sprung up in the desert. The wilderness has budded and blossomed

like the rose, and the rudeness of primitive nature has yielded to the transforming touch of civilized man. Henceforward, its mission is at an end; its form shrinks and dwindles into airy nothingness, and its loud tones fade away into the echo of a whisper, till lost in the rocky caverns that gave it birth.

* * * *

The town of San Francisco is situated on the south side of the entrance to the Bay, from which it is distant about six miles, having opposite to it an island called Goat's Island, (Yerba Buena) on account of the number of these animals found upon it. It is covered with abundance of grass and brushwood, and forms a conspicuous and picturesque object in the harbour, rising out of the centre of the clear waters, here and there deepened by the bold shadows of the surrounding hills. The flow and ebb of the tide here are sufficiently strong to bring a vessel to the anchorage in front of the town, and to carry it outside without the aid of wind, or even against an unfavourable one. San Francisco itself is about

fifty-five miles distant, in a direct line from the point where the Sacramento and San Joachin rivers enter the Bay, the gold region commencing about twenty miles up the delta of the former stream.

The site of the town is in a sort of irregular valley, surrounded by the lofty hills I have already mentioned, and presents, from the water-side, a confused spectacle of innumerable houses, heterogeneous in form, substance, and arrangement. I was not yet, however, to make more intimate acquaintance with it, for our vessel lay at a considerable distance from the landing-place, and our men were too anxious to go ashore, to wait until I could collect my luggage, and make the necessary preparations for accompanying them in the boat.

We had been boarded by a custom-house officer shortly after the anchor was cast, and I felt not a little pleased to recognise in him an old acquaintance. He had also visited the mines, having gone thither from San Francisco; and I was indebted to him for much

valuable information respecting the route to the "diggins" by water, which information I took note of at the time, as likely to be serviceable to me, in the event of my determining to return to them at the convenient season. I have since learned that his intelligence was accurate. As it so happened that my plans were not carried out as I had anticipated, it may not be out of place to mention here the particulars I learned respecting a city which has now gained a world-wide celebrity, and which is the grand halting-place for the northern, as Stocton is for the southern, mines. Sacramento city is situated at the junction of the American Fork and Sacramento rivers, and is distant from San Francisco one hundred and thirty miles by water; the usual cabin-fare by vessel being twenty-five dollars, inclusive of provisions; the deck-passage, sixteen dollars, without them. On leaving the Bay of San Francisco, the traveller passes through the Strait of Pueblo into the bay of the same name, and proceeding in a north-easterly direction, enters Suissoon

Bay, through the Carquines Strait, continuing his course, for some twenty miles, to the mouth of the Sacramento river. The strong and rapid current encountered here renders the remaining fifty miles generally very tedious; and the stream, being extremely narrow, vessels frequently run aground; although those who are well acquainted with the soundings can take up in the greatest safety a craft of five hundred tons burden. As the river is not navigable higher up than the city, boats are obliged to stop here; but, even were it practicable for boats, the miners would soon find it convenient to land, as, in its further course, the stream diverges somewhat from the known mining districts. From Sacramento city, the adventurous gold-hunters proceed to the "diggins" of their adoption, with their horses, mules, and teams, or by any mode of conveyance they may be fortunate enough to procure.

Landing is very difficult at Sacramento city, even at high water, there being no convenience for this purpose, except such as is afforded by

a single plank thrown across from the side of the vessel to the bank, whilst, at low water, the mud renders such accommodation as this wholly useless. Indeed, a superabundance of mud is a characteristic common to the three bays I have named, the deposit extending in broad flats almost entirely round them. In San Francisco Bay, they predominate most on the eastern side.

At the period of which I am writing, Sacramento city might have numbered about four hundred dwellings, including stores; the large majority of these consisted of sheds—so little did they deserve the appellation of houses—constructed partly of wood, partly of canvass, amongst which might be counted half a dozen of good frame-boarded residences. They seem to have been erected with some pretension to regularity, as they form streets, running parallel and at right angles with the river. Most of them are trading establishments, about a dozen figuring as hotels, and a large proportion of the remainder being grog-shops; in fact, to speak more particularly, there is not a house

On Stone by R. J. Hamerton

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SACRAMENTO CITY.

W. Shobert, Publisher, 30 Cf Marlborough Street, 1850.

in the town where ardent spirits are not retailed.

The principal store is kept by a Mormon, who, having arrived in the country and settled in it previous to the discovery of the mines, had already succeeded in amassing a large fortune. The eating-houses—or hotels, as they are somewhat pompously called—do a most extensive business; for, as appetites less frequently fail than the supplies of provisions, there is ample opportunity for levying heavy contributions upon the hungry. As a general rule, however, the charge for board and lodging is nearly the same as at San Francisco, though the accommodation is bad, to the last degree, none of these eating or lodging-houses containing any beds, the lodgers being obliged to stretch themselves on any available spot of ground, or convenient article of furniture. The influx of strangers is so great, indeed, that, notwithstanding the rapidity with which these ephemeral dwellings are erected, and the innumerable tents of every form and size scattered in the suburbs, the population is far in

excess of the actual conveniences for its reception.

But, although Sacramento city offers so few comforts and attractions, an attempt has been made at magnificence in the erection of a handsome tent—a wall-tent, as it is commonly called—of a circular form, having perpendicular sides, and which is about thirty feet in diameter, by twenty-five in height, from the conical top of which floats a large red flag, inscribed with the words, "Miners' Exchange," in large letters. Its use is admirably illustrative of the prevailing spirit, and of the marvellous shrewdness exhibited by speculators in taking advantage of it. It is furnished within with six or eight large gambling-tables, each of which is let out at the nightly rental of twelve dollars. They are usually crowded to inconvenience by persons who come to try their fortune, and who frequently lose their all at various games of chance, the principal being *monté* and *rouge-et-noir*.

This establishment was started by two individuals, one of them, a mere boy, who had made

about three thousand dollars at the "diggins;" the other, a carpenter from San Francisco, whose services and experience were taken into consideration, in forming the partnership, as an ample set-off against the capital of the principal. The concern could not but prove highly lucrative, as, independently of the rentals from the gambling-tables, there is a bar established inside, opposite the door, where large profits are realized upon the refreshments sold to the players and strangers, and the interior of which is rendered additionally attractive by an exhibition of caricatures, chiefly of the miners and of noted characters, intermixed with others of a different class, the whole being intended to disguise the nakedness of the walls, or sides rather.

Ground-rents range excessively high; and speculators in land, who were early in the field, and commanded capital, have been enabled to exact enormous sums from those who sought to establish themselves on particular spots. Building-lots, measuring about 25 feet by 50, were worth 10,000 dollars, and extremely

difficult to obtain even at that price; the most eligible localities fetching sums which, considering their extent, appeared ruinous. The avidity with which they were bought up, however, proved that the purchasers possessed unlimited confidence in the produce of the mines and the extravagance of the miners.

In short, Sacramento city owes its growing importance entirely to the discovery of the gold mines, and to its admirable position as a starting-point to the upper ones. It certainly is not a desirable dwelling-place at present, whatever it may eventually become, though it admirably serves its purpose, namely, to offer to the vast multitude of birds of passage that flock to this region a spot where they may find a temporary rest for the soles of their feet ere they migrate further north. From hence, indeed, oxen and mule-teams are constantly travelling to all the "diggins," and every available mode of conveyance seems in request; so much so, that only lately they were charging carriage at the rate of one hundred dollars a hundred weight of a

hundred pounds; but the immense overland emigration introduced so many teams, that, at the time I am writing of, it had come down to twenty dollars for the same load.

I may add, that the "red woods," which are situated to the north-west of Pueblo Bay, constitute a remarkable and an agreeable feature in the landscape. They are of great extent, and, previously to the discovery of the gold mines, supplied the natives with the chief part of the timber they use. But they were also notorious as the resort of robbers and deserters of every description, who here carried on their lawless practices, secure against pursuit, adding to their unlawful gains by the more honest recompence they received for sawing and felling timber.

This "red wood" is a species of cedar, and seems more abundant in these parts than any other kind of native wood I saw. It possesses many singular properties, and amongst others, that of turning quite black when scoured, but, when polished and varnished, assuming the appearance of mahogany. It is extremely

well adapted for furniture and cabinet-work, and many of the doors and sashes of the houses in San Francisco are made of it, a coat of varnish imparting to it a finish and a pleasing colour, besides adding greatly to its durability.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Difficulties of landing—A *ruse de guerre*—First aspect of San Francisco, as seen from a height—Scene on the beach, on the arrival of an emigrant ship—Dandies at a discount—Friends from the "diggins"—Early history of San Francisco, under the Spaniards and Mexicans — Its rise, present prosperity, and future prospects—The Mission of San Dolores.

Eagerly desirous as I was to escape from the confinement of the vessel, and to see the town, I beheld the boat and her crew depart with feelings of considerable mortification and disappointment. We were moored far away from any other vessel, and from the landing-place, and at least three hours elapsed before I succeeded in attracting the attention of any of the boatmen. At length two Kanakas, who had just returned from the shore to one of the traders, seemed to understand that I wanted them, though they made no effort to come

alongside. One of the sailors, however, who had been in these parts before, and profited by former experience, hailed them again, adding—

"Don't you want to buy anything? I've got some clothes to sell. Won't you have 'em? They're dog cheap."

The artifice succeeded, and they were very soon alongside our vessel; when I discovered the boat to be too small and too leaky to take my luggage and myself at the same time: I therefore determined to leave the former on board for the present; and, although the men seemed disappointed at losing an opportunity of striking a bargain for clothes, they readily undertook to convey me to the landing, which was about a quarter of a mile off, and for doing which they charged me the modest sum of two dollars and a half.

The landing-place appeared to have been constructed less for the convenience of foot-passengers, than to afford facilities for the disembarkation of luggage and goods from on board the vessels, for which purpose it stretches

out a great distance into the water, being a kind of platform upheld by ponderous wooden pillars. I observed, in the immediate vicinity of this pier, a vast number of rafts, composed of huge pieces of timber fastened together, and having planks bound across them, all of which were heavily laden with goods of various descriptions, piled up to what seemed to me to be a dangerous height. These rafts are usually towed ashore with their cargoes, and pushed as high up on the mud flats as possible, by means of long poles.

On landing, I had to clamber up a steep hill, on the top of which, and opposite to where I stood, was a large wooden house, two stories high, and scarcely half finished. In the rear of this, rose another and a steeper hill, whose slopes were covered with a multiplicity of tents. To my right, ran a sort of steep, or precipice, defended by sundry pieces of cannon, which commanded the entrance to the harbour. I next came to the "Point," and, crossing it, found myself within the town.

The first objects that attracted my notice were several canvass houses, measuring from ten to forty feet square, some being grog-shops, others eating-establishments, and the larger set apart as warehouses, or places of storage. The proprietors of the latter were making enormous sums by the accommodation their tents afforded to the hundreds of travellers who were arriving every day from different parts, and who, being extremely embarrassed as to what they should do with their luggage, were heartily glad to find any safe place to store it in, and content to pay for the convenience. As I passed another half-completed wooden structure, I thought I would venture upon an inquiry, just by way of ascertaining whether I had any chance of procuring employment as a house-painter. I was offered thirty-six dollars a-week; an offer I did not immediately accept, notwithstanding the favourable reception I met with.

The spectacle which the beach presented from a convenient opening, whence I could comprise the whole at a glance, was singularly

interesting and curious. A crowd of individuals, in motley garb, and of every variety of race, might be seen pressing eagerly upward towards the town, jostling and pushing one another, in their anxiety to be first, yet looking eagerly about them, as if to familiarize themselves at once with the country of their adoption. Here were dandies from the United States and from France, picking their steps mincingly, as they strove to keep pace with the sturdy fellows who carried their luggage; their beaver hats, fashionable frock-coats, irreproachable and well-strapped pantaloons, exciting the derisive remarks of the spectators, the majority of them "old Californians," whose rough labour at the "diggins" had taught them to estimate such *niaiseries* at their proper value. By their side stalked the stately and dignified Spaniard, covered with his broad-brimmed, low-crowned *sombrero*, and gracefully enveloped in his ample *serapa*, set off by a bright scarlet sash. He turns neither to the right nor to the left, nor heeds the crowd about

him, but keeps on the even tenor of his way —though even he has occasionally to jump for it—presenting, in his demeanour and costume, a striking contrast to the more bustling activity of the Yankees, who are elbowing every one, in their anxiety to go a-head. A lot of shopboys, too, mere lads, as spruce and neatly attired as though they had just stepped out of some fashionable emporium, mingle with the rest, and, as they enter the town, strike up the popular parody—

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

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

A group of Englishmen, muscular in form, and honest in feature, are chaffering with the keen-witted Yankee porters for the carriage of their luggage. There is an air of dogged resolution about them, that plainly indicates they will not submit to what they evidently

consider an imposition. Such a sum for so slender a service! Well, then, they can carry their baggage themselves; so they will: and, quickly shouldering it, some depart in the track of the rest, whilst two or three remain behind, to watch what is left, until their friends return. They are manifestly well known to one another, and seem to be almost intimate: the voyage has made them friends.

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

Here come ten or a dozen plainly but comfortably dressed mechanics; hard-working looking men they seem, and just the sort of persons to make their way in a country where the artisan occupies his proper position, and where honest toil—and dishonest, too, some-

times—is almost certain to reap a harvest. Far differently will you fare, and far preferable, too, will be your lot, in regions where privation is the rule, to that of many amongst your numerous fellow-travellers, unaccustomed as they are to laborious occupations—with frames uninured to fatigue, and constitutions unhabituated to scanty fare, to exposure to heat and cold, and wet and sudden changes! Whilst you are succeeding in your object, they will grow wearied, disappointed, and home-sick, and long to be back again on the theatre of their former struggles.

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

after getting here, the emigrant must have some little means.

The majority of the emigrants are men occupying a respectable station in society; some are even distinguished in their calling: but the eager desire of making a fortune in a hurry has induced them to throw up good employments and comfortable homes; to leave friends, relatives, connexions, wife, children, and familiar associations, to embark their strength, intelligence, and activity, in this venture. All is bustle where they have landed: boats going to and fro; rafts slowly discharging their cumbrous loads; porters anxiously and interestedly civil; all excited; all bent on gain: ships innumerable in the bay; mountains around; a clear, blue sky above; and the bright waters dancing in the sun, until they touch the horizon in the distance, blending their brightness with his golden track.

I walked on until I came up to a group of men, who, like myself, were looking on the busy scene before us with no small degree of interest. I recognised amongst them two of

the volunteers, with whom I forthwith claimed acquaintance. The whole party had come from the mines, as was easily to be seen from their appearance, which was something the worse for wear, their countenances being weatherbeaten and bronzed by exposure; whilst their attire, consisting of buckskin coats, leather leggings, and broad-brimmed hats, denoted the sort of labour in which they had been recently engaged. I learned from them, in the course of a subsequent conversation, that they had all of them been successful at the "diggins." One of the number had made, or "picked," two thousand dollars, and the rest, from that to nine thousand dollars each, within the space of a few months. With this, however, they were far from satisfied, most of them being determined to realize a large fortune before they quitted the country; for not one of them seemed to have the remotest intention of settling.

An individual of this number, nevertheless, was compelled to remain longer than he anticipated; for, having returned to the mines,

and there procured as much gold as satisfied him, he was robbed of the whole, on his way back to San Francisco. He thereupon coolly went back to the "diggins," and recommenced his labours; with what success I know not; but he remained there during the whole period of my sojourn in the country.

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

With regard to the town towards which all were pressing, they expressed an unanimous opinion. It was the most wonderful

place in the world—for its size—and promised, if it continued to progress in importance and extent as rapidly as it had done of late, to eclipse some of its rivals of more ancient date; inasmuch as civilization was imported to it full-grown, backed by all the energy and enterprise which gold could inspire, or the possession of it in almost unlimited quantities develop.

Some few years previously, San Francisco consisted of but some three or four wooden and *adobè* houses, inhabited by a few Californians and sailors; the latter seeming to have been cast upon the shore—like stray whales—rather by chance, or ill-luck, than enticed to locate themselves here by any prospect of bettering their condition. The climate of this particular spot certainly offered no inducement; whilst the spirit of commerce had not yet sufficiently extended along the shores of the Pacific to reach this harbour, and make known to the world its extraordinary beauty, and the facilities it offered for the development of industry and trade.

For a space of nearly two centuries, the degenerated Spanish race had held the whole country, never dreaming of its value, nor, in their sluggishness, deeming the improvement and development of its resources possible. Though a people as eminently qualified by nature in every respect as their Anglo-Saxon conquerors, to aid the general cause of progress, their efforts had been confined to procuring the mere necessaries of existence, to an indulgence in the enjoyments of a semi-savage life, and to a complete abandonment to the practice of some of the worst vices of civilization. Whilst they neglected to introduce and to cultivate those useful arts which alone can create or add to a nation's greatness, or elevate the individual, the chief ambition of young and old, throughout California, under Spanish rule, was to attain to excellence in horsemanship; to acquire dexterity in the use of the lasso; to become proficient at *monté*, bill-cards, and nine-pins; and to become adepts at the numerous tricks and subtleties peculiar to games where skill

sometimes is made to counteract a run of ill-luck.

So engrossed were they in these pursuits—the majority of them frivolous—that it was not to be wondered at that their missions and towns should be gradually deserted, and fall into ruins; at once a standing reproach to the people, for their negligence and effeminacy, and to the Mexican Government, for its supineness, its reckless, narrow-minded policy, its prejudices, and its injustice. In the hands of any other people, these missions might and would have been made the legitimate instruments of improving the population, and of ministering no less to their physical necessities than to their spiritual requirements.

Instead of becoming the nucleus of intrigues, they would have been converted into so many centres, whence would have radiated streams of intelligence and civilization, which must rapidly have changed the entire aspect of the country, and not less powerfully co-operated to develop the minds of the people, and elevate their character. But, under the blight-

ing tyranny of the Mexican authorities, progress was impossible; San Francisco could never have become a city; and the lands in its immediate vicinity must have lain waste, and thinly populated.

Beneath the cherishing wing of the American Government, a splendid destiny opens before it as a great commercial emporium; and, even had the gold mines never been discovered, the working of which has imparted such a sudden and so extraordinary an impetus to its growth, the natural advantages of the harbour could not have long remained unknown to the trading populations of the busy East; for it must, under the restless energy of the Yankees, have become, in course of time, the principal resort of their vessels of war, of merchantmen and whalers; whilst the hardy Anglo-Saxon emigrants would eventually have flocked into the country, eager to open up a new and a wider field for their industry. Agriculture, too, would soon have claimed its right to measure the strength of its sinewy arm against the stubbornness of the soil,

whilst it fostered the rich but neglected valleys into easier productiveness. The repulsive high lands it would have converted into fertile gardens, teeming with the wealth of the vegetable kingdom, and adorned them with the choicest of nature's blooming gifts; and everywhere the busy hand of man would have imprinted the mark of progress. But all this could have been only the result of time, had circumstances not so singularly contributed to develop this felicitous consummation with a suddenness unprecedented in the history of cities.

Yet no one acquainted intimately with California can pronounce it as being particularly well adapted for agriculture. Something in this way can and will undoubtedly be effected; but the country must owe its future eminence wholly to the admirable position of San Francisco, which—especially with reference to China and the Sandwich Islands—has the entire East at its command. This circumstance alone would have rendered the acquisition of California of paramount importance

to the Government of the United States, even if the gold mines had not been discovered, as the formation of a good overland route across the Isthmus of Panama would have enabled it to monopolize the China trade, and, under any circumstances, must have established the United States on a far higher commercial footing than it could otherwise have possibly hoped to attain. Add to this the abundance of cattle and pasturage, affording at all times a plentiful supply of animal food, equal to meet the wants of any amount of population, and to renew to any extent the stock of provisions on board the numerous vessels that frequent the coast, and no doubt can be entertained that extraordinary facilities existed for successfully, if not rapidly, settling the country.

The discovery of the gold mines, however, has done at once for San Francisco what it was reasonable to anticipate time only could have effected; and its progress in importance has far outstripped the most sanguine expectations which could be based upon any hypo-

thesis hazarded on the strength of its admirable position and facilities for trade. Nevertheless, its growth seems unnatural; and, looking at it as I saw it then, it left on my mind the impression of instability, so marvellous was it to gaze upon a city of tents, wood, and canvass, starting up thus suddenly, forming but a halting-place to the thousands who visited it; having for citizens a large majority of gamblers and speculators; and presenting of civilization but the rudest outline, and some of its worst vices. It was impossible, indeed, for an observer to contemplate San Francisco, at this particular period of its history, and not to feel that everything about it savoured of transition. A storm or a fire must have destroyed the whole in a few hours; for every house, shed, or tent, had manifestly been constructed merely to serve the end of the actual occupier; they were all adapted for trading, but not a convenience or a comfort appertained to them, to indicate a desire or an intention of settlement. Every day brought new-comers, and added to the number of ephe-

meral structures which crowded the hill-sides. Mechanics of every description of calling were at work, earnestly, busily, and cheerfully; and, whichever way I turned, there was bustle and activity; yet, withal, I felt that such a state of things was unsound, because resting on what was essentially speculative, and I doubted not but a great change must come before the city could be regarded as substantially advancing. Comprised at a glance, it presented no other appearance save that of a confused crowd of tenements, of every variety of construction; some high, some low, perched upon the steep hills, or buried in the deep valleys—but still tents and canvass everywhere and anywhere, their numbers defying calculation, their structure and position all analysis. There existed neither wells nor ponds within a very considerable distance; and what struck me as most singular, being aware that the Spaniards had a mission here, there was no sign of a church. I subsequently ascertained that the site of the Mission of Dolores, about five miles distant, had been preferred by the

Spaniards, and that divine service was performed there still. Indeed, this locality being less exposed to the severe *summer* winds, and the land in its vicinity being richer, and comparatively level, had attracted the early settlers, and the Mission of Dolores as it was styled, had long been far in advance of San Francisco, previously to the invasion of the country by the Americans, in 1846, and contained, besides the church, a great many substantial *adobè* houses, with a population of 500 persons. Since San Francisco has shot up into repute, Dolores has declined, and will doubtless yield completely to its rival ere many years have elapsed.

Having given my impressions of San Francisco, as derived from a cursory inspection of its exterior, I will now examine it more in detail, reminding the reader that if he feels desirous of accompanying me in my explorations, he must not be over fastidious as to the company he may occasionally meet with.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Washington Market—The Colonnade—The Gotham Saloon—The Plaza—The Miners' Bank—The Parker House—The Café Français—An old acquaintance—Notions respecting the mines and things in general, as they appeared at San Francisco—High price of provisions—The Gamblers of the Parker House—Some account of the game of *monté*—Tricks of the game—Tapping, and barring, and bursting—The Golden Eagle—The El-Dorado—Gamesters' chances—Curious customers—Jemmy Twitcher—The City Hotel—The Custom-House—A prudent calculation—My first night in San Francisco.

As I proceeded along the road leading into the principal street of the city, I was uncomfortably reminded that it would soon become necessary for me to select a place where I could procure refreshment; and in connexion with this necessity, arose another consideration no less important, namely, where I should lodge? There was no other mode of solving the difficulty, save by an exploration of the

localities; accordingly, I kept these objects in view, whilst I also gratified my curiosity by continuing my perambulations.

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

I turned into the principal street, and soon came up to the Market itself, which is a wooden house, about thirty feet square, kept by an American. To my right, as I advanced, were some stores and hotels, and a confectioner's shop of remarkably neat and clean appearance: these were all one story, wooden buildings. One of the hotels was appropriately designated as "The Colonnade." It was kept by a

volunteer named Huxley, and differed from every similar establishment in the town, inasmuch as the proprietor allowed neither gambling nor drunkenness on his premises. To this the "Gotham Saloon," a little further on, offered a perfect contrast, for here there were several *monté* rooms and a large bowling-alley, where persons who had a taste for the latter amusement might indulge in their favourite pastime for a dollar a game. This Saloon was likewise kept by two volunteers, as was also the confectioner's by a fourth; so that three of the most noted houses in the town were rented by men who, a few months before, scarcely possessed anything save their enterprise and their industry, but who were now on the high road to opulence. The more credit was due to them, and others of their brethren whom fortune had similarly favoured, because, at first, they had deep-rooted prejudices to encounter, which prudence and perseverance only could have enabled them to overcome.

I came next to the Square, or "Plaza," on one side of which, and fronting it, stood the

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

I passed another hotel, similar to this one, but not quite so large, and came presently to a low wooden house, of most unattractive and unprepossessing exterior, which was dignified by the name of the "*Café Français*." As this seemed likely to suit my present convenience, and to promise a scale of prices on a par with its external appearance, I entered boldly, and seated myself at the dining-table. I noticed, as I went in, that, notwithstanding the poverty without, there

HOW TO TURN A SHIP'S COOKING-GALLEY INTO A CAFÉ RESTAURANT.

was abundance within; the counter being literally overcharged with French pastry, a variety of ingenious culinary preparations, and some foreign liquors. Whilst my dinner was preparing, I scanned the faces about me, and felt much pleased to recognise in one of the guests an old acquaintance from New York, although he was disguised *à la Californienne*, his person being enveloped in a handsome *serapa*. He did not know me again, when I first addressed him, but soon recollecting me, we entered into conversation.

"You are so altered in dress and countenance," he said, shaking me heartily by the hand, as he seated himself by me, "that I could scarcely recognise you. You are about one of the last men I should have expected to meet with in California. You've been to the mines, of course?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"What success had you? Good, I hope."

"But middling. Indeed, I may say I have been very unsuccessful as a digger."

"Sorry for that! Is there really as much

gold there as they say? It sounds too good to be true."

"Perhaps so; but it is true, nevertheless: and, although I have been greatly disappointed in what I went to do, and what I saw, I am not disposed to decry the 'diggins,' and to derogate from their reputation for richness."

"How was it you fared so poorly, then?"

"The truth is, that they who want gold must work very hard to get it. There is abundance of it, I am persuaded; but only such men as can endure the hardships and privations incidental to life in the mines, are likely to make fortunes by digging for the ore. I am unequal to the task."

"Well, I asked the question because I have met with a great many persons who, having been disappointed—possibly, from a similar cause—abuse the mines and the country, and, on their return home, set to work contradicting all the fine tales told about them. I suppose a journey to them pays, however?"

"Knowing what I know, and having seen as much as I have, I would not advise any

one, for whom I cared, even if he possessed an iron constitution, to abandon a position in a civilized country, on the chance of seeking a fortune at the mines."

"That sounds strange, too; but it only corroborates what I have already heard fifty times over. I think I could, within an hour, assemble in this very place from twenty to thirty individuals of my own acquaintance, who would all tell the same story. They are thoroughly dissatisfied and disgusted with their experiment in the gold country. The truth of the matter is, that only traders, speculators, and gamblers, make large fortunes. I question very much—from the information I have been able to derive from one and the other—whether two-thirds of the gold dug out by the hard-working but imprudent miners do not pass into the hands of such men; and I feel satisfied that few of the gold-hunters—notwithstanding they may, some of them, have picked up, in the best season, sums exceeding seven thousand dollars—will return home very much richer than they left it."

"Don't you think that the great money-making season is over, even for the speculators?"

"It's hard to say what there is left in the mines; but, supposing they should continue to yield abundantly, as they doubtless will for some little time longer, their reputation for inexhaustible resources will attract an incalculable number of emigrants, who will all—or the majority of them, at least—flock to the "diggins;" but in proportion as the numbers of the diggers increase, will their chances diminish of picking up any very great quantity of gold; and their failure, in this respect, must necessarily affect the traders and speculators; for a man who has realized by the hardest labour only eight dollars a day, is not so likely to pay thirty or forty dollars for a coat, as he is who has dug out a hundred dollars'-worth in the same time. Then there are the markets, which, in consequence of the influx of so many strangers, will become glutted with all sorts of goods. This must bring down the prices of things, and will en-

tail great losses upon all, if not ruin upon the majority. Only those who shall have already made the largest fortunes will be able to withstand the crash; for they can bide their time, and afford to pay, during a dull season, the enormous ground-rents demanded for stores and dwelling-houses. You may depend upon it, we shall have immense fluctuations in prices; and they who are compelled to effect ready sales on these occasions, will not recover. At least, this is my individual opinion."

"But surely, folks will reply to that—the more people that come into the country, and go to the mines, the more gold will be dug out, in the aggregate, and the greater will be the demand for goods. Even should prices come down—as, in the natural course of business operations, they must—the merchants will make up for the decline by the greater bulk and amount of sales. I have invariably met with this reply, when I have ventured to express opinions similar to your own."

"Such an argument rests upon an assumption; for it is taken for granted that all who

go to the mines will henceforth be able to dig out a fair proportion of gold. Experience, however, has proved that, even under the most favourable circumstances, only the very few have procured a large quantity; a minority have been partially, say tolerably successful; but the mass have experienced disappointment. Under present circumstances, then, we may reasonably conclude that two-thirds of those who go gold-digging will fail to realize any thing over and above their expenditure. Then, as the gold becomes more generally distributed, the demand for the more expensive articles and descriptions of merchandise will diminish. Again, it must be borne in mind, that, granting a fall in prices would force more extensive sales, though at declining profits, the expenses of the merchants and traders would increase disproportionately. They must, in such a case, enlarge their warehouses, engage more hands, secure the services of a greater number of trustworthy clerks; and, in the present state of the country, I need not tell you that all this

is far easier said than done, and would be a very ticklish experiment. Only think, now, of paying a thousand dollars for a shed about twenty feet square; twelve hundred dollars for the use of a lot; two thousand and three thousand dollars to every assistant. Why, what amount of business must they anticipate, to warrant them in incurring such risks?"

"Well, then, ground-rents must come down."

"Not a bit of it! People who come here must lodge somewhere; houses and tents must be built; and, if the holders of land can't get their price one way, you may rely upon it, they will in another. What they fail to get out of the bulk, they will make up in the detail. I can give you an illustration. A man I know had a lot, and let it very well; but he kept on raising the rent, till his tenant told him he couldn't pay so much. 'Well,' says this man, 'I guess you had better clear out.' And so he did. The landlord then divided the lot into sections, and let each at a

large advance, almost doubling his former rent. What one couldn't pay him, three or four did. And that's how it will be with ground-rents, generally, for a very long time to come."

"Well, I suppose you are not going to the mines, as you seem to entertain doubts respecting them?"

"Not I, faith! I am going to do what is better than digging for gold, on a chance of finding it. I shall speculate; and, if my scheme proves successful, I shall realize a fortune in a short time. Have you any inclination to join me in it?"

"What kind of a spec. is it?"

"A theatrical one. I want to build a large establishment for dramatic representations. Come!—six thousand dollars, and the partnership is a done thing. It will be a substantial investment, I can tell you. You will treble your money in a few months."

"I am not in a position to become your partner, for I am as poor as a church-mouse, just now. But I imagine that, if the specula-

tion is really so promising and safe, you will have no difficulty in finding plenty of persons in San Francisco ready and even eager to join you."

"I suppose I shall. As to its succeeding, I have no doubt about it. A theatre, you see, must attract, because here it would not only be a novelty, but would offer cheap entertainment; at least, much cheaper than the gambling-tables. People gamble here, because they have nothing better to do, and no other place to go to but the *monté* and roulette saloons. Besides, if need be, we can do a little in the same line ourselves. What do you think of it, eh?"

"It appears to me to be a very feasible undertaking, and, I dare say, will succeed; but, as I have not the dollars, I cannot join you."

"Well, that's a fact; for the dollars are a *sine qua non.* It's six thousand pities, as you are just the sort of man I want."

"Much obliged for your flattering opinion; but this is not the first good chance I have

lost for want of money; and, I dare say, thousands more are in the same predicament. I shall not grieve much about it, that's one consolation."

"No, don't, unless you can make money by it. I shall see you again soon, I dare say. I must be off now. Good by."

My friend went away, after shaking me warmly by the hand; and, as I had finished my repast, consisting of a beef-steak, two eggs, and a couple of cups of coffee, I prepared to follow him. I specify the items of which my repast was made up, because of the price I paid for them—namely, two dollars and a half. I was informed, on hazarding an observation respecting the amount, that the charges were excessively moderate, any thing in the shape of a dinner being usually charged one dollar and fifty cents; half a dollar each for the eggs, which were extras, was only a reasonable price for such luxuries, as they frequently sold for double. I considered the information thus obtained to be cheap, of its kind, and went away with

a mental reservation not to eat any more eggs in California, unless they were of another description than the golden ones.

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

This is not only the largest, but the handsomest building in San Francisco; and, having been constructed at enormous expense, and entirely on speculation, a concurrence of fortunate circumstances alone, such as had followed upon the discovery of the gold mines, could have ensured its prosperity. It was now one of the most frequented, fashionable, and firmly established hotels in the country; and, in so far as it presented a model to the builders and settlers in the town, was a signal illustration of the shrewdness and enterprise of the Yankee character, and a standing credit to the projectors and proprietors.

It is built entirely of wood, and contains two very spacious principal rooms; the one a

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

The saloon contains two very handsome billiard-tables, which are constantly occupied by players, chiefly Americans, some of them of first-rate excellence. The charge was a dollar per game of a hundred, and they were no sooner vacated by one party than another came in. At one of them I saw Mr. C——, of Monterey, whom I have already alluded to. He was engaged in a game with a New Orleans man, who, with some difficulty, beat him. He paid his loss with great *sang froid*, and crossed over to the *monté*-tables, where he lost about eight ounces; but soon won

them back, and finally went away the winner of thirty ounces besides.

The establishment contained nine gambling-tables, which were crowded, day and night, by the citizens and the miners; many of the latter staking very large sums upon the turn of a card. The stakes, however, varied from twenty-five cents to five thousand dollars; and the excitement of some of the losers was frequently fearful to contemplate. Some who gained largely prudently withdrew; and I was informed that, a few days previously to my arrival, a new-comer from the States, who was bound for the mines, having come into the saloon, and tried his fortune at the *monté*-tables, luckily made twenty thousand dollars, with which he returned home, by the steamer, two days afterwards.

As this game of *monté* is not generally known, except in Spanish countries, some description of it may not prove unacceptable.

It is apparently very simple. The table is covered with a cloth — usually black — and divided off into four compartments,

either by means of pieces of tape, or chalk lines. On each of these divisions a card is thrown down, with its face upwards, two of them being winning cards, and two losing ones; the former being determined by the deal, the first colour turned up winning. The money staked is placed in the square near the card on which the bet is made, and which is, of course, considered most likely to become a trump. There are two *croupiers*, seated opposite to each other, whose duties are, the one to shuffle and deal the cards, the other to "pay off;" and the office of the latter is by no means a sinecure. The bets being made, for and against, the cards are cast; and the bettors on the fortunate colours receive double the amount of their stake, the deposits, or *en-jeux* of the losers, being appropriated to paying the bets made by parties on the opposite side. If there is any residue, it is swept off into the bank in the centre of the table. You may, however, be what is termed "caught in the door;" that is, the colour or suit on which you bet may appear on the top

of the pack. In this event, the bettor on that colour gains only half the amount of his stake, whilst they who bet on the other lose all. The bank makes a great deal of money in this manner; and it is a favourite trick of dealers to catch a player on any particular colour which he is likely to bet upon. But bettors may "bar the door." This is done by experienced gamblers whenever there is a large amount in the pool; and the mode of operation is by placing a part of the sum deposited, whether in ounces or in dollars, edgewise against the pile. "Barring" entitles the bettor to take back the stake he had risked, whilst it likewise affords him considerable protection against the dexterous shuffling of the dealers, who are amazingly expert, and can easily, when they deem it advisable, bring any particular card or colour to the top of the pack. Of course, the more inexperienced players, who are not "up to barring," or who are too imprudent to take advantage of the privilege, risk either the loss of their stake, or a gain of only the half of its amount.

Notwithstanding the skill and adroitness of the dealers, they very often encounter difficult customers, who are equally as cunning as themselves, and who, by a peculiar process known as "tapping," involve them in heavy losses, even to the extent of the entire capital of the bank. When the dealer is challenged "to tap," he may decline; though I never saw it done once. I suppose a refusal implies that there is a doubt respecting the honesty of the play, and it is not considered good policy to refuse. The "tapper" proceeds to stake a sum, equal to the amount in the centre of the table, upon a particular colour, which, if it turn up first, entitles him to sweep away the whole sum. I have seen many banks exhausted by this process. When a bank is cleaned out, it is said to be "bursted." Not unfrequently one of the bettors against the bank, who may have staked a considerable sum, if he entertain any suspicion of trickery, will request permission, when the betting-cards have been laid out, to deal the remainder himself; a request rarely refused. It is a

resource which often turns the tide. I was present, on one occasion, when a merchant of the town—an experienced player, from New Orleans—who had been betting to the tune of twenty ounces at a time with unvarying ill-luck, took the dealing into his own hands four times out of five, and not only regained his former losses, but "bursted" the bank. In such a dilemma, the *esprit-de-corps* amongst the Californian gamesters manifests itself in a manner which—apart from any consideration of morality that may be involved—does them infinite credit, as they never fail to lend to the banks that may chance to have been broken down, or "bursted." I saw enough to convince me that, although, if fairly played, *monté* is strictly a game of chance, it affords far too many facilities for cheating to justify one in risking much at it. Some of the experienced gamblers seemed able to calculate, with a nicety of tact and judgment that surprised me, the succession of suits as they turned up, so as to almost possess a power of staking with a certainty of winning. Indeed,

in this nice calculation consists the real skill of the game—the little there is in it; though, where so much trickery is carried on, the most superior judgment will be often at fault.

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

I took particular interest in one of the players, a Spaniard, very poorly dressed, but who was betting at the rate of from twenty to forty ounces at a time. It was almost edifying to witness the equanimity with which, amidst the general excitement, he lost his money. He played at *monté* until he was relieved of

all his ready cash, when he turned away laughing, and went over to a roulette-table, of which I subsequently ascertained he was the proprietor. He made a few turns at it; but, finding he could not attract a customer, proceeded to borrow some money of a friend, with which he returned to the *monté*-table. He staked eight ounces on the "*cavallo*," a face-card, representing a female on a horse, and which we call the "Queen," and doubled his venture the first deal. The Spaniard swept up his gains with a smile; the dealer looked as cool as ice in autumn, called for liquor and cigars, and laid out anew. The "Queen" once more fell out; and the Spaniard, faithful to his colours, betted in her favour again, but barred the door. The "seven of clubs" was in the door, and the roulette man took back his money. Not so many others, who, less cautious, lost large sums. The play continued, and the Spaniard invariably won, until all the gold that had been in the centre of the table was ranged by his side: it might have amounted to several

thousand dollars. Full of confidence in his run of luck, and looked up to by the rest of the players, who seemed to place implicit faith in his judgment, and to take their cue from him, he now proposed "to tap;" the amount in the bank, taken at a guess, as I hurriedly calculated it, might have been equal to eight thousand dollars in silver. The bet was accepted; he turned up the "cinquo," the tapping-card, and the dealer proceeded. The opposing card won, and the Spaniard paid back the whole of his winnings into the bank. All this took place without the smallest outward evidence of emotion, either on the part of the Spaniard or of the banker.

At another table, a scene of a different kind took place. There came in a rough-looking individual, whom, from his appearance, I judged to be a miner, and who, throwing down a twenty-five cent piece, declared, with an oath, that he would stake his all upon the first card dealt. He won, and continued playing and winning, increasing the amount of his bets until they attained the

GAMBLING SCENE IN SAN FRANCISCO.

figure of a hundred and fifty dollars. Having won again, he swept the money into a canvass-bag, and exclaimed—

"I am off now! I think I've got enough to treat all my friends."

With this remark, and a very peculiar gesture to the banker, who was trying to persuade him to have another turn, he hurried away, amidst the laughter of the company.

On leaving the Golden Eagle, I crossed over to the El-Dorado, a similar establishment, constructed of canvass, and, like the one I had just left, crowded to suffocation, although with a lower class of players. Nevertheless, the sums of money won and lost here are astounding. I could scarcely find elbow-room; whilst the heat arising from so many persons, the fumes of tobacco, the rank atmosphere, and the noise, and crowding, and jostling of so many drunken Spaniards and Americans, rendered a stay here—even for a limited time—excessively disagreeable.

Whilst I stood watching the game, there entered a singular-looking person, attired in

a flashy, theatrical sort of style, in a bright-flowered, white satin vest, a blue jacket, polka inexpressibles, a hat knowingly turned up in the brim, and adorned with an ostrich feather, wearing white kid gloves, and switching about a monkey-headed cane. In the other hand he held a large handkerchief full of silver, which, with an air of pompous indifference, he laid upon a card that had just been thrown down. He lost, and, with a laugh and a whistle, took up the handkerchief, and emptied its contents upon the table, quitting the saloon as abruptly as he had entered it. The money he had lost amounted to eighty-five dollars, all in the very smallest Yankee coins, namely, quarters, shillings, and five cent pieces. The bankers looked aghast at their success, on account of the trouble of counting the coins, the time occupied in doing which was worth gold to them. However, they screwed up their courage to the task, and completed it amidst much merriment.

"Just like Jemmy Twitcher!" said one of the bystanders.

As nobody asked who Jemmy Twitcher was, I concluded that everybody knew him; and, wishing to be equally well informed, ventured to ask of a person who stood close by me.

"He's one of the Hounds," replied my informant, without turning his head aside.

I was no wiser than before; but, as the game was now being made, and the general attention fixed upon the table, I contented myself for the present with the information that Jemmy Twitcher was a Hound, and no doubt too celebrated a character for me to remain in San Francisco long, without learning more about him and his fraternity.

I now proceeded to the City Hotel, a large but somewhat antiquated building, constructed of *adobè*, after the Spanish fashion, but hybridized by American improvements. The interior was even more insufferable than the El-Dorado, in respect of the boisterousness of its frequenters. In the first room that I entered were five gambling-tables, doing a "smashing business;" a term employed, somewhat in contradiction to its import, to denote

prosperity. The majority of the players were Americans and other foreigners, intermixed with a goodly number of Spaniards of the lowest order. There was the same excitement, the same recklessness, and the same trickery here, as at the other gambling saloons, only infinitely more noise and smoke, and swearing and inebriety.

Here I met with another of the volunteers, who proposing a walk, we went out together, and proceeded to the Plaza. I found a good many old acquaintances set up in business at this spot; one, who had been a captain, had recently turned money-broker, and now kept an office for the exchange of coin and gold-dust, having entered into partnership with a highly respectable and agreeable individual, of active business habits, who promised to prove a great acquisition to the concern. Theirs was the only establishment of the kind in the town; and, as the miners are always ready to sacrifice a dollar or two per ounce, for the convenience of possessing coin, I have no doubt they have by this time realized a very

handsome fortune. They were even then far on the road to competency. I also found that Colonel Stevenson had become a large speculator in land. His office was on the other side of the square.

Speaking to my friend of the Parker House, he told me that one of the present proprietors of it had been a dragoon in the regular service, who had made a fortune at *monté*, at which game he was considered to excel. He informed me, too, that the majority of the lawyers and doctors whose signs I had observed, were nothing more than clerks and apothecaries, who had come from the United States upon a venture.

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

The streets leading down to the water-side contain comparatively few hotels or eating-houses, they being chiefly wood and canvass trading-stores. I observed amongst them several newly opened auction and commission-rooms, where goods were being put up, recommended and knocked down in true Yankee style. An immense number of wooden frame-houses in course of erection met our view in every direction; and upon remarking that many of them appeared to have been purposely left incomplete, I ascertained that this arose from the extreme difficulty of procuring lumber, which, on account of its scarcity, occasionally fetched an incredibly high price. A good deal of it is brought from Oregon, and some from South America. Many of the larger houses, but far inferior, notwithstanding, to such of the same kind as could easily be procured in New York at a rental of from 300 to 400 dollars a-year, cost here at least 10,000 dollars to build them, the lots on which they were erected being valued at sums varying from 30,000 to 50,000 dollars, ac-

cording to the locality. Many spots of ground, just large enough for a small trading-house or a tent to stand upon, let at from 1,200 to 2,000 dollars.

In one of the streets adjacent to the square, I noticed an eating-house called the New York Lunch. It was fitted up in the Yankee style, with numerous small partitions, or boxes, for the exclusive accommodation of parties who chose to eat their meals unobserved, or to enjoy comparative privacy. Here I had some tea and chops, for which I was charged one dollar and a half.

Taking a note of these items as I wandered about the neighbourhood of the square, and adopting them as the basis of a calculation which it was necessary for me to make, in order to estimate the probable amount of my weekly expenditure, I came to the conclusion that, at three meals a day, my board would cost me from thirty to thirty-five dollars a week, exclusive of lodgings and other requisites. I thought of the man on the hill, who had offered me thirty-six dollars a week to

paint his house, and made up my mind to refuse the offer.

I passed my first night in San Francisco stretched upon a form, in a tavern, where the boisterous mirth of a rude crowd of revellers effectually prevented me from dreaming of anything else but drums and cymbals clattering in most execrable confusion and discord. Once I thought I was drowning; for I experienced the peculiar roaring sensation of deafness incidental to immersing one's head in the water; but, on awakening, I found that one of the company, being waggishly inclined, had poured some of the liquor he was drinking into my ear. I thought it a very poor joke, but laughed at it as though I very much relished it; and, altering my position, dozed off again, and remained in a dog's sleep until the morning.

CHAPTER XXV.

A start in search of fortune—Antoine of Monterey—My first venture—The California liner—Difficulties of captains in getting crews—Cheap lodgings at the Buckland—I set up in business—My success—I take a partner—The Yankee miner—More news about the "diggins"—My second partner—His squaw and squaller—Novel cottage—The season in San Francisco—Scarcity of good water—Value of a horse and cart—Wages and profits.

I was stirring betimes in the morning, and, after refreshing myself by plunging my fevered head into a bucket of cold water, proceeded to look about me for employment, being fully alive to the necessity of activity. Fortune signally favoured me, by throwing me in the way of Antoine, a negro from Monterey, whom I had formerly known, and whom I met as I directed my steps towards the beach. It was an agreeable surprise; for he was a shrewd, industrious fellow, and appreciated, as keenly

as any Yankee, the value of the "go-ahead" principle, which he carried out to its fullest extent.

"Well," he said, "glad to see you, massar. What you tink? Him sell your saddle for sixty-five dallar. Dat good, eh?"

"I don't know, Antoine. I ought to know what you gave for the horse you swapped for it."

"Well, Goramighty's truth, him cost me forty dallar. Bery good spec. dat, eh?"

"Rather, for you, Antoine; though, as I wanted the beast, we both did well. What are you doing here?"

"Oh, not partickler, nohow, what him do. Sometime go arrands, sometime spec'late: anything for make money. An' you?"

"I am on the look out, Antoine. I've been to the mines, and done very little good, and am come here to try my luck as a painter."

"Well, now! Dat's de bery ting. Capital spec., dat saddle; so him jist tell you someting good."

"What is it, Antoine?"

"You see dat boat, yon'er? Dere, on de beach, a stickin' in de mud?"

"Yes. What of it?"

"Dat am b'long to California steamer. Dat am de Cap'ain's boat, and dere am de Cap'ain, 'longside. Him jist want a painter; so you dam lucky."

"Just the very thing, Antoine; for I can see it will not answer to stay in this place, kicking one's heels. I'll be off at once."

"Well, I see you 'gain some time."

"Yes, yes. Thank you heartily, Antoine. Good by, for the present."

I shook hands with the good-natured fellow, and had got a few paces from him, when, turning about, I saw him grinning and rubbing his hands, as if in high glee.

"Ah, ah!" he shouted after me; "dam good spec., dat saddle; but tink you got it back now, eh?"

I could not help laughing at the observation, which implied a very great deal, and, waving my hand to him, hurried down to the beach, where I at once accosted the Captain

of the California, and informed him that I had just heard he wanted a painter.

"Oh, yes," said he; "right enough. We've got one aboard; but the fellow's a butcher by trade, and handles the brushes like a monkey. Jump in; we'll soon pull you alongside."

On our way, we struck a bargain, I undertaking to paint the interior of the vessel in my best style, and he agreeing to remunerate me at the rate of two hundred and sixty dollars a month, clear of all expenses. I subsesequently had reason to believe that this was not the most favourable arrangement for myself that I might have made; for the sailors, who were the only men around me with whose circumstances I could compare my own, were receiving from one hundred and twenty to a hundred and fifty dollars a month. I was, however, but too glad to procure immediate employment, and had no reason to complain during the three weeks I remained on board.

The Captain's position was not by any means an enviable one; for he experienced not only the greatest difficulty in procuring able-bodied

men in the place of those who deserted the vessel, from time to time, to go to the mines, but in keeping them on board when they had engaged themselves, even on their own terms. They would quit the vessel when their services were sometimes most required, and remain ashore several days, gambling and carousing. I remember, he was for some time sadly put about for a cook, although he offered three hundred dollars a month for one; and, on one occasion, was several days getting in a stock of coals, which might have been shipped in six hours. I had a great deal of work to do, for the greater portion of the wood-work inside was new, the Captain having been obliged, in consequence of the scarcity of fuel, during the passage, to break up the wainscoting, and burn it. He was an agreeable, gentlemanly person, ardently devoted to the service in which he had engaged; and, but for his energy and perseverance under the trying circumstances incidental to it at this particular juncture, it is doubtful whether the Californian Line Steamer Company

could have performed successfully and regularly their contract with the Government for the transport of the mails.

For a long time, the success of the line seemed more than doubtful, until the influx of a larger population, by reducing the price of labour and provisions, and by diminishing the expenditure, and increasing the traffic, settled the point to the satisfaction of the parties who had set the enterprise on foot. But the arduous nature of his duties, and the anxiety they entailed, finally affected the Captain's health; so that he was obliged to renounce the service, and return home. The Company, however, appreciating his efforts, presented him, on his last arrival in New York, with a handsome testimonial, in acknowledgment of the energy and judgment displayed by him in overcoming the extraordinary difficulties he had had to encounter.

Numberless vessels lay at anchor in the harbour, in much the same predicament as the California, being obliged to wait for their crews until the mining season had terminated,

or advanced so far as to render the operations at the diggings too laborious and unhealthy to be continued, even by the strongest, or the most inveterate gold-hunters; some of whom, persisting in their work in spite of the remonstrances of the more experienced, fell victims to their cupidity, by braving the climate.

The masters of the vessels resorted to all sorts of expedients to preserve their necessary complement of men, but in vain. One, the captain of a merchantman, whose crew had refused to work, and openly avowed their determination of going to the mines, sent to the Commodore, and they were all carried away, in double irons, on board the Ohio flag-ship. But such severities as these, notwithstanding they answered their end for the moment, produced no permanently beneficial results; and, as a rule, the men were more masters than the masters themselves, who, making a virtue of necessity, became resigned to their fate, consoling themselves for their disappointments by indulging in the dissipation of the town.

Having completed my work on board the California, to the satisfaction of my employer, I took advantage of an opportunity to return to San Francisco, afforded by six of the crew taking a holiday ashore. We encountered a heavy current and a strong wind, which, in spite of our strenuous efforts to make the "Point," drove us some three miles to the north-west of it; and I found that landing in boats was not generally an easy matter, the beach being shingly, and in some parts very rocky. We effected our object at last, getting thoroughly wetted in our attempts to get on shore; my blankets, &c.—which, by the way, I had to carry for a distance of four miles—having already been soaked by the washing of the sea into the boat. The journey proved a most uncomfortable and fatiguing one, owing to the depth and looseness of the sand, and the irregularity of the route.

The first person of my acquaintance that I met, chanced to be Antoine. I encountered him in the middle of the town; and, notwithstanding he was a man of colour, I saluted

the kind-hearted fellow with a friendly grasp of the hand. I make this remark, not by way of casting any reproach upon colour, but because I could not yield to the American prejudice in this respect; although this act of recognition attracted the contemptuous notice of the passers-by. I should be sorry to excuse myself for having given way to so natural an impulse. I only wish that hundreds of the white-skins I have known had possessed a tithe of the honesty and good nature of the negro Antoine.

He rated me soundly for not having struck a more lucrative bargain, and really made me feel extremely simple. However, I told him that it was only paying for experience; though he seemed to imply, by the shake of the head with which he intimated it was no business of his, that I ought not to have been so long in California without gaining that very necessary stock in trade.

"An' what him goin' to do now — eh, massar?"

"I shall do what I told you it was my in-

tention to do, Antoine. I shall establish myself as a painter. But, as my means are small, and expenses heavy, the first thing for me to do is to find out some cheap and moderately comfortable boarding-house, near a place where I shall have conveniences for carrying on my business. You, now, are a man of experience, and may perhaps be able to tell me whether there is such a place in San Francisco as a cheap boarding-house?"

"Am sixteen dollar a week cheap now—eh?"

"What, for board and lodging?"

"Iss; bote on 'em: an' good at de money."

"Well, I think that would suit."

"Den you get it at Bucklan' House: an' dere a shanty in him back-yard, where plenty room for paint all day."

I thanked Antoine for this interesting piece of information; and, having ascertained from him the direction of Buckland House, repaired thither at once.

It was a good-sized tavern; the conveniences and accommodations for lodgers consisting of

one very large general room up-stairs, with three smaller ones below, besides the kitchen, a kind of supplement, in the rear. The sleeping-apartment—into a corner of which I threw down my blankets—did not contain a single bed or mattrass, but there were about twenty bundles ranged all around it, containing the *serapas*, or the blankets of the lodgers. There were likewise several trunks, on which were seated sundry well-dressed and some very rough-looking individuals, who were engaged in various occupations; one of them—evidently a new arrival in the country—writing a letter on a portfolio opened across his knees; others, stitching leathern purses, or repairing their saddles and clothes; and some lounging listlessly about in various positions, all more or less uncomfortable. I observed that there was a total absence of chairs, and no fireplace; whilst the only article that did duty for a table, was a kind of hybrid between a bench and a stool, covered now with shavings and carpenters' tools. Several boards were missing from one side of the room; so that I could

plainly witness anything going on in the kitchen, the roof of which ran up as high as the windows of this apartment. The planking, too, not being closely adjusted, admitted a piercing draught, which promised to prove anything but refreshing or pleasant, though we were in the height of the summer season, during which the wind blows with unmitigated bleakness and violence. Even now, as I stood, I felt the whole building creak and groan, as if in an agony of ague. Here, however, I took up my abode for the present; and here, as it turned out, I was destined to remain two months.

Our creature-necessaries were on the same scale of discomfort, and of quality provokingly consistent. Beef of passable age and tenderness; sour, home-made bread, and beans; tea of doubtful origin, without milk; and butter of a flavour so powerful as to render economy in its use prudent as a sanitary measure. Remonstrances proved unavailing. The invariable reply was, that no better could be procured in the town; and it was the same with every other article. Besides, the charge was only sixteen

dollars a-week—a clencher that never failed to put the most inveterate grumblers to the rout.

The proprietor of the Buckland was a Mormon, who had originally left his native home to settle in Oregon, but hearing of the discovery of the gold mines, had come to California, visited the "placers," and dug gold, and traded with such success, as to be enabled to purchase several extensive lots of ground, on one of which he had built the establishment in which he resided. He had purchased these lots—as I was informed—for about 2,500 dollars; and they were now worth 50,000; so rapidly had the town increased. He was reported to be a wealthy man; and I must do him the justice to say that he neglected no opportunity of increasing his gains, his family and himself being admirable specimens of the acquisitive class to which they belonged.

I had procured my chests from on board the brig in which I had come from Monterey; and one of these, set up in my corner, served me in lieu of easel; another, with my bundle of blankets, for a table and a seat; and the

roof of the kitchen for a place to dry the productions of my pencil. I was, however, reduced to great straits for colours. These were not to be procured in the town for money; but knowing that, unless I renewed my stock, I could not carry on my pursuits, I hired a boat, and pulling out into the harbour, went from ship to ship, persevering in my inquiries, until I fortunately succeeded in purchasing from one and the other a few of the most necessary pigments, and two or three brushes; the latter certainly but indifferently adapted for the use I intended them to be put to; but, in the absence of better, welcome makeshifts. According to New York prices, the materials thus obtained might have cost me three dollars; as it was, they came to twenty-eight dollars, not including my loss of time.

I now hung out my sign in front of the house, and soon succeeded in attracting customers; and although I laboured under many disadvantages, I averaged an ounce a day—far better, I thought, than digging even two ounces in the mines, exposed to privations

and the merciless inclemency of the weather. As I became more known, my business increased so rapidly, that I found myself unable to oblige my patrons by executing their orders, and therefore determined to look about me for a partner.

For a considerable time I was unsuccessful, owing to the difficulty of finding a person at once tolerably competent, and who could be confided in. At length, I met with a man who had followed the trade in the States, and with whom, after making some inquiry concerning him, I entered into a temporary arrangement. Happy for me was it that our articles were of this kind; for, after some time, although our business flourished beyond my expectations, I discovered him to be a gamester, and habitually addicted to inebriety. He was one of those convivial, specious, smooth-tongued individuals, who easily procure friends by their insinuating manners, and lose them as fast by their unsteadiness, or want of principle. These failings compelled me, for my own credit sake, to dissolve the association as

speedily as possible; although I felt the loss of his services to be one not easily repaired.

Amongst the casual residents at the Buckland was a man of very rough appearance, who had come down from the mines, intending to take the steamer, and return to the United States in a few days. He slept near my corner, and used to watch me at my work, but without offering any remark. The evening before the vessel was to start, he occupied himself arranging the contents of his trunk, on which he slept. I had finished work for the day, and was seated on my blankets, enjoying the fumes of a cigar, when, observing him take out two leathern bags, such as the miners usually carry their gold in, and inferring from this circumstance that he had been unusually fortunate—since he was returning home—I ventured to open a conversation with him.

"I suppose you made a good find of it," said I, laughing, as I addressed him, and pointing to the leathern bags.

"Well, pretty good, I calc'late," he answered; and, as he spoke, he turned out the

contents of the bags into a tin pan, and pouring them into another, which he took out of his chest, began to blow the dust away, at the same time shifting the gold out of one pan into the other, as I had seen the miners do.

"How much have you got?" asked I.

"Well, now, guess. Can't you guess?"

"I'm no judge. My experience that way has been too limited."

"Well, I reckon there's four thousand dollars here, good weight; and that's a fact."

"Is that all you brought away?"

"All! I suppose it is; and no such easy work to get that, I tell you."

"Why didn't you stay and make fifty thousand, since you were so successful?"

"Why didn't I? Yes! why didn't I? Why, because it was such tarnation hard work. I 'most busted myself, as it was. If you knowed how hard I worked to get them 'are four thousand dollars, I'm darn'd if you'd ax why I didn't stay longer."

"Most of the miners that leave the 'diggins' do so because they can't find enough to satisfy

them, or are disappointed altogether. But if they are only tolerably successful, they usually stick to it; so I can't help saying I think it odd you came away."

"Well, now! let them stop that likes it. I'm sick and tired of mining—etarnally sick on it. It's on'y fit for niggers to do, that sort of work; and darn'd if they'd stand it long. I had two notions, I reckon, when I came down here; one was to buy a small craft to trade up and down the rivers, and the other was to go back to the States, buy a small farm, and settle down. 'Atween them 'are two notions I was in a reg'lar fix; but I've made up my mind now."

"And you are going to leave California, a country where, if you chose to stay and dig, you might make a fortune in a couple of years."

"Well, I don't mean nothing else, and that's a fact."

Having cleaned his gold by the process I have mentioned, he put it back into the bags, and, having completed his arrangements, laid

himself down to sleep on the top of his treasure. He left the next day, and I never heard anything more of him.

After continuing alone for a considerable period, I found that the necessity was daily becoming more imperative for me to procure assistance, as I lost so much valuable time in consequence of being obliged to attend to the out-of-door business, collecting orders, bills, &c. The best painters, however, were at the mines; and those who remained, refused to lend their assistance under twenty-five dollars a day, which was quite as much as I could earn myself by the closest application. From one of them I heard that my late partner had purchased a brig for six thousand dollars, with which he intended to commence trading between San Francisco and Sacramento; and I subsequently ascertained from himself that this was correct.

One morning, I chanced to meet with an acquaintance whom I had known at Monterey, where he was engaged in the capacity of a commissary's clerk, but who had acquired

some knowledge of painting previously to his coming out to California. He proposed that we should go into partnership, and do business upon a large scale—a proposition I willingly assented to. He stipulated, however, for leave of absence for ten days, having to go to Monterey upon important business, as he informed me. Of course I could not but acquiesce, and he departed. On his return, I found that he was accompanied by another partner, in the person of a beautiful half-caste Indian girl, who had an infant at the breast. She had a great deal of Spanish blood, and her features were more decidedly Castilian than Indian. But, as this was a partnership on his own account, I had nothing more to say in the matter than to compliment the handsome Eugenia upon her personal attractions.

My companion and I now proceeded to set up our establishment; and having procured the framework of a tent, and the services of a sail-maker to cut and sew our canvass, for the sum of forty dollars, we obtained the use of a lot in the lower part of the town, near the

beach, where, when the canvass was prepared, we erected our habitation. It was thirty feet long, by fifteen in width, and ten in height, to the point of the roof, where the ridge-pole ran across; the sides and ends, which were perpendicular, being exactly six feet high. The frame that supported this large quantity of canvass was very slight, lumber being so expensive. Six uprights of scantling, about three inches square, and of a suitable length, were sunk into the ground, and plates ran along the top of them, as supports to the rafters, which were nailed to these at one end, and to the ridge-pole at the other. The whole did not cost us more than a hundred and fifty dollars, economy having been studied in every possible manner. A neat sign, with the name of the firm prominently displayed, was finally suspended outside; and we soon got a thriving and lucrative business.

This was the first painter's establishment of its kind that had as yet been set up in California—at least in San Francisco—and, for the month we remained in it, we had every

reason to rejoice at the success which attended our efforts. But at this time my health began to be affected by the extreme dampness of the ground, for the spot was low and marshy; and it therefore became necessary to remove, the more particularly as the proprietor of the lot politely informed us that he was offered seventy-five dollars a month for it, which he did not intend to refuse. As such a rental, in such a locality, did not suit us, we took the hint, and looked out for another lot.

It was fortunate for us that we shifted our quarters; for, although in the summer season the whole of the ground in the neighbourhood of our establishment was eagerly bought up, or let at enormous prices, the locality in winter became uninhabitable, on account of the heavy floods which poured into it from the upper lands, converting it into a mere morass, and spoiling the goods of the unlucky traders who happened to be resident there.

We removed to a plot of ground directly opposite the "Shades" hotel, which we obtained at a monthly rental of fifty dollars: a

sum sufficiently high, as this was an inferior business locality, although we continued to carry on our affairs prosperously. I suffered greatly, nevertheless, from the wretched peculiarities of the climate of San Francisco. From noontide till midnight there is a perfect gale of wind continually blowing during the whole of the *summer season*, and that of the bleakest kind; and in the winter, though it is mild, so great an abundance of rain falls, as to render pedestrian exercise, for the commonest purposes, a regular toil, so inundated are the lower portions of the town, which may be said then to stand in a huge basin of mud.

We dared not expose the side of our tent to the wind, as it would have presented too large a surface; wherefore, being perfectly aware of the inconvenience we should have to encounter in such a case, and of the danger there would be of the entire structure being blown prostrate, the uprights were firmly sunk into the ground, so as to oppose the smallest possible angle to the action of the rude gusts that swept the hill. We likewise strengthened

it in every manner and by every contrivance we could devise, driving stakes into the ground, and securing our tent to these by means of ropes. But, in spite of all our precautions, the wind ultimately proved too strong for us, and, added to the dust, which blew in upon us in clouds, settling upon our finer descriptions of work, and either spoiling it, or involving considerable additional labour, at last induced us to sell our tent, and endeavour to rent a small wooden house suitable for our purpose, as it did not appear at all improbable either that the whole concern would one day be blown down about our ears, or that we should be carried away along with it, on a novel kind of balloon excursion across the Bay.

In the mean while, my companion and his wife had contrived to obtain a residence which, under the circumstances, was snug and comfortable enough. One of his acquaintances, a clerk in one of the principal stores, possessed an old ship's cooking-galley, about ten feet square, which he had purchased for a mere trifle, as it was beginning to rot away.

My partner advised him to have it cut in two, enlarged with additional boards, and converted into a dwelling-house, which he offered to hire as soon as it should be completed.

The clerk had a lot of ground upon a hill at the back of the town, and which was at that time lying useless. The idea seemed to please him; and the galley having been removed to the desired spot, and at an expense of five hundred dollars transformed into a dwelling capable of accommodating two persons, it was hired by my partner, at a monthly rental of fifty dollars. He was scarcely in it, when another party bid sixty for it.

This cottage contained only one room; but, to compensate for this, it had two doors and a window. The interior was covered with canvass, closely tacked to the sides, so as to exclude the piercing wind, to which, as the building stood on an eminence, it was particularly exposed. The owner valued it, and the lot on which it was built, at six thousand dollars, which he might readily have obtained for them at any time.

It had, however, in common with all the houses of San Francisco, one great disadvantage; though, in this instance, the inconvenience was more felt, on account of the elevated site of the dwelling. There was no water near at hand; and many a time have I seen him toiling up the hill, and panting with the effort of carrying up to his little hut a large bucket or a pitcher of this necessary, which he had been obliged to fetch from a considerable distance.

The water, generally, is not good; and, in the opinion of medical men, it generates much sickness. Wells have been sunk in different parts of the town, often with great labour; but in almost every instance the result has been unfortunate, the water in them being found too dirty to be adapted for culinary purposes, or wholesome to drink. The wells in the valley near which my partner lived contained perhaps the worst; yet none better was to be obtained within a distance of a mile and a half. Ultimately, the inhabitants will be compelled to have water carted up to their

doors, at a considerable expense, and very great inconvenience.

Our business mean while prospered satisfactorily; so that we were enabled to employ several men, whose services we fortunately secured in consequence of the large influx of newcomers; a circumstance that reduced the rate of wages. Nevertheless, we paid at the rate of eight, twelve, and fifteen dollars a day, and thought ourselves extremely lucky to get off so cheaply.

We had not been long established in our new tent, when I received a visit from Antoine, who had kept up a constant communication with me, and rendered me good service, occasionally, by timely recommendations.

"Well, Antoine; what brings you here now? Where are your horse and cart?"

I ought to have stated that this was a speculation of Antoine's. After being employed in various ways, chiefly running of errands and carrying parcels, it occurred to him, that by purchasing a horse and a cart,

he might set up as a carrier, with fair prospects of success; and, accordingly, he put this idea to a practical test. It answered admirably; and for a long time, Antoine had it all his own way, his lowest charge being three dollars per load, for the lightest description of goods. The shed in which he lived served as a stable for his horse, and his cart he converted into a bed; so that he was at no extra expense for accommodation for them. His average earnings were from twenty to forty dollars a day; and, knowing him to be doing well, I was surprised to hear him ask me, in reply to my question—"whether I had any message or parcel for Monterey?"

"What! Are you going to Monterey?" I inquired.

"Iss, massar; I goin' back dere, cos no more good for me stop here, now."

"Why, what's amiss, Antoine?"

"Oh, dere ain't noting 'miss; 'xcept as I am sold de horse an' cart. Dam good spec., too, massar."

On further inquiry, I ascertained that, in

consequence of the rapid increase of the population, but particularly of the number of horses and vehicles from the United States, Antoine had encountered such competition latterly, as to induce him to give up the carting business.

"Him ain't done so bad, massar," he said, in reply to a remark of mine. "'Bout five, six tousan dollars. Dat bery good spec.—eh, massar?"

I thought it was; but no more than he deserved for his industry and perseverance; and I told him so. He seemed gratified by the compliment; and we shook hands and parted.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Politics in San Francisco—Democracy *versus* Aristocracy—The right of the majority illustrated—Pistol law *versus* Mexican law—State of society—The Hounds—Their exploits—The Hollow—Expulsion of the Hounds, and capture of their leader—The Chinese settlers—The French—A dusty dinner—The Happy Valley—Frightful condition of the Brooklyn emigrants—Deaths from scurvy.

During my stay in San Francisco, there occurred a great deal of political excitement, in consequence of a large proportion of the citizens being opposed to the existence of Mexican law, and in favour of removing the Alcalde, Doctor Leavenworth, who had obtained office under the old system. They were strongly inclined to set up a new form of city government, better calculated to meet the requirements, and more adapted to the prejudices and habits of a large Yankee town, such as this had now become, and with which

the actual order of things was utterly at variance. But the more aristocratic section of the population discountenanced any change, and persisted in urging the maintenance of the Mexican system; at least, until the central Government at home should make known its intentions on the subject of a State constitution for California. Thus the mass of the inhabitants became divided into two distinct parties, neither of which exhibited any inclination to yield ever so little in favour of the other.

The democratic party insisted that they were quite able to govern themselves, and, as a majority, competent to set about it, and to select the form of government they liked best. They were resolved not to wait; and, as the opposition seemed equally resolute not to succumb, there was every appearance of a serious conflict. But matters were brought to a crisis without bloodshed.

The democratic party, headed by the Sheriff (one Johnny Pulis, who contrived somehow to keep office under both Governments), and

accompanied by a strong and determined number of their followers, proceeded one day in a body to the office of the Alcalde, and, presenting themselves as a deputation from a majority of the Yankee citizens, demanded that the town records and papers should be delivered up to them. The Alcalde refused to acquiesce in this demand, standing firm upon the authority with which he had been invested, and urging that he durst not, consistent with his duty, as the guardian of the archives, surrender possession of them into the hands of a party not duly authorized to require them from him. He should, therefore, decline to give them up.

The demand was then repeated, backed by a representation to the effect that, according to the fundamental principles of the American system of government, the will of the majority was absolute: and an intimation was, moreover, thrown out, that unless the Alcalde complied with it, the party were determined to search for and take them away by force.

The Alcalde reflected for a moment; and, whilst he appeared to be making up his mind, suddenly stretched out his hand, and took down from a shelf behind him a large horse-pistol, which he deliberately cocked. As he did this, he said—

"Well, gentlemen, you can proceed; but you must be answerable for the consequences."

"Oh! if that's what you mean," exclaimed Pulis, coolly withdrawing a similar weapon from his coat-pocket, and examining the priming, "I've got one of them 'are things, too; so it's who'll have the first shot. Go in, boys," he continued, addressing his followers, as he levelled the pistol at the Alcalde's head; "if he budges, he shan't squeak more than once."

The Alcalde, who, doubtless, never had really meant resistance, but who probably thought that a show of it was necessary at his hands, to save his honour, now attempted to parley, with a view to gain time; and assured the deputation that the town records were mixed up with other papers strictly pri-

vate; so that a few days would be necessary for him to sort them. The delay was refused; a couple of hours only being granted to him for their production. A huge waggon had accompanied the party, and was drawn up outside, ready to receive the documents, the waggoner lying in it at full length, unconscious of what was passing. It had been brought out of bravado; for there were but few books and papers to take away. The Alcalde, finding that further resistance or excuse would be useless, finally surrendered the documents into the keeping of the guard left to take charge of them. The waggoner exacted two ounces of gold for his services; and, upon this sum being refused him, on the plea of its being an exorbitant charge, seized one of the principal and most valuable of the books, and kept it until his demand was complied with.

The democratic party being now in the ascendant, proceeded to organize the new Government, appointing their officials, and otherwise seeking to establish their authority. On

the other hand, the Alcalde nominated a new Sheriff, in place of Pulis, who now acted on the opposite side; and, coming down one day into the newly-constituted police-court, formally entered his protest against the proceedings, and ended by demanding, through the new Sheriff, the restitution of the public archives. Of course, the President, or chairman, refused compliance, urging the will of the majority as constituting a right superior to any authority the Alcalde could produce, and asserting his intention of maintaining that right. The Alcalde, who appeared to have presented himself as a mere matter of form, then withdrew.

The supporters of the two parties were now at open war; and numerous were the quarrels and frays that ensued. But the Alcalde was not yet beaten, and sent a message to General Reilly, at Monterey, who had recently been appointed Governor, informing him that a rebellion had broken out in San Francisco, and demanding his interference and protection. The result of this application

was, that the sturdy old veteran issued a proclamation to the effect that Mexican law, in the person of the Alcalde, should be upheld. But the announcement was treated with contempt; and, as matters were daily growing worse, the passions of both factions becoming more and more excited, there appeared no possibility of preventing a tumult. At this juncture, the General himself arrived at San Francisco; but finding that, in spite of the political change, things were going on as usual, he resolutely declined to interfere any further, and left the two parties to settle their differences as best they could.

This was an immense triumph for the democrats; and they did not fail to celebrate it after the most boisterous fashion. Nevertheless, the new Government did not work well at first; for the individuals appointed to office were not men who, by their talents or their reputation, were qualified either to rule or to command respect from their fellow-citizens—hence, scarcely an act of theirs met with public approbation. They were utterly

unable to collect the taxes; and were at length reduced to such straits, as to be be compelled to resign. Upon this, a fresh set of men came in, selected with some care from the more intelligent and respectable classes of the townsfolk, under whose auspices the aspect of affairs soon changed for the better; and order and something like an observance of the Sabbath succeeded to open rioting and gambling on that day, and to flagrant breaches of the law so common at all times.

Amongst the most prominent and notorious disturbers of the public peace figured an association similar to that of the Mohawks, so elegantly described by Addison, and known by the cognomen of the "Hounds," in connexion with which I have mentioned the name of one Jemmy Twitcher. I do not know that this person could be considered worse than his companions, amongst whom only his grotesque style of dressing caused him, perhaps, to figure more remarkably. They were a desperate set of brawlers, gamblers, and drunkards—anything but scrupulous in levy-

ing exactions of every kind upon those whom they marked as their prey, and not at all particular as to the consequences. Their headquarters were at a tavern called the "Shades," the resort of the wildest characters in San Francisco.

It was kept by a very civil, obliging individual named Patterson, formerly a volunteer, but who had quitted the service a considerable time before I entered it, and who, repairing to the mines, had been fortunate enough to dig a large amount of gold. With this he speculated in land, and succeeded beyond his expectations; one of his lucky projects being the establishment of the tavern in which he resided; and which, in spite of its bad name, was one of the most money-making in the town. Before I left, its reputation had improved; and it is now as well regulated as any other.

With such facilities for dissipation as San Francisco afforded at this time, it was not to be wondered at that such a fraternity of ruffians should exist there, and be enabled to

carry on their nefarious practises with impunity, or that it should have been a resort for a very large number of the most desperate adventurers, who here found a wide field open to their operations. Crowds of these men paraded the streets at all hours, but especially at night-time, committing acts of the most revolting nature, and daringly insulting the timid passers-by. Crimes of almost every hue were openly perpetrated with the most audacious recklessness; for there existed no law to which the citizens could, with any degree of confidence, appeal; and a general feeling of insecurity, in respect both of property and person, pervaded all classes. The numbers of these wild and lawless men who thus infested the public thoroughfares were perfectly astounding; some of them would gallop headlong through the most frequented streets, and, alighting at any hotel, demand what they wanted, and often refuse to pay for it; involving peaceably-inclined persons in unexpected broils, which not unfrequently resulted in serious frays, and terminated in blood-

shed. At other times, a party of them might be seen, attired in the most gaudy clothing, with rich-coloured *serapas* thrown over their shoulders, their hats ornamented with feathers and artificial flowers, perambulating the streets in the company of the most abandoned Spanish women or Indian squaws, and shouting the most ribald songs and jests, interspersed with oaths and imprecations of the most horrid kind, or relieved by passing remarks of unparalleled indecency. Frequently, on such occasions, the party would be preceded by a motley band of music, consisting of a violin or two, perhaps a horn, but always a banjo, and several pairs of rib-bones But, whether by night or by day the "Hounds" or their associates came out, their appearance was a signal for every respectable person to retire into his house, in order to avoid being compromised in a quarrel, or becoming a butt for their obscene ridicule.

There was a place called the "Hollow," a valley situated to the north-east of the town, where there were a few *adobè* houses, occupied

ONE OF THE OLD SPANISH HOUSES IN SAN FRANCISCO—SCENE NEAR "THE HOLLOW."

by four or five Californian women of loose character, and which was another favourite resort of these men. If the accounts circulated respecting these sinks of iniquity were correct, nothing could exceed the profligacy and wickedness of the orgies to be witnessed at them. The political opinions of these men were in keeping with their morality. They breathed nothing less than extirmination against the Chilians, and hated the Californians to the death. Their doctrines, indeed, were of the most uncompromising, levelling character, and put me disagreeably in mind of those advocated and practised by the Terrorists during the most sanguinary period of the old French Revolution.

In illustration of their lawless practices, and of the manner in which they harassed the poor Chilians, three of them one day entered the store of a native of that country, and demanded goods on credit to the amount of seventy-five dollars, saying they resided at the "Shades," and were well known. So they were; but not in the sense they wished to

imply. The poor fellow, who was totally unacquainted with them, declined their patronage, being by no means prepossessed in their favour, nor at all reassured by their manner. Upon this refusal, they assumed a threatening attitude, and so effectually terrified him by their menaces, that he supplied them with what they wanted; and even offered no resistance, when, on their taking their departure, they helped themselves to several articles to which they had, apparently, taken a sudden fancy.

Many other acts of a similar nature were perpetrated by them with the same impunity; the dupes not unfrequently getting severely maltreated when they ventured to remonstrate or resist; but at length the new town-council resolved to put an end to such depredations; and only awaited a favourable occasion for suppressing the association altogether. The opportunity presented itself sooner than had been anticipated; for the "Hounds," ascertaining the determination of the authorities, though they did not discontinue their excesses, yet for

some time cleverly contrived to commit them under circumstances which favoured their escaping detection.

Not very long after the outrage alluded to above, a party of the association was seen parading the streets, with drums beating and colours flying. That same night the store of a Chilian was broken into by them, and the unfortunate proprietor nearly murdered; he being so severely beaten, as to have been left for dead. His neighbour and fellow-countryman, apprehending a similar fate, fled to an adjacent house, and, creeping underneath the floor of it, lay there trembling until the noise had subsided, and the deed of blood was perpetrated.

The next day, however, due information of this act of ruffianism having reached the authorities, several hundred of the citizens, amongst whom were several Chilians and Spaniards, armed with guns, pistols, and other weapons, proceeded through the town, towards the "Shades," crying out the names of several well-known members of the gang. On reaching

the hotel, they arrested first two of the principal leaders, and subsequently six or eight more, all of them notorious characters; but ascertaining that another, who was admitted to be the ringleader, or captain, had escaped to a small craft that lay in the Bay, they tracked him, and succeeded in bringing him back into the town. They were all brought to trial; and though some escaped, for want of sufficient evidence, the proofs against the principals were too strong for them to escape conviction; and they were accordingly sentenced to be transported to the United States. Too mild a punishment, many will think, and perhaps an extraordinary one; still, severe enough, when it is remembered that they were well known there, and would probably meet with their deserts as soon as they landed. The example was all that the circumstances of the case seemed to require; and it certainly produced its effect; for, in consequence of the capture of the principals, the association was broken up, and comparative tranquillity restored to the city.

It must not be supposed, however, that acts of rioting and crime were confined to the "Hounds;" for the place abounded in characters of a similar description; besides, the citizens would themselves not unfrequently take the law into their own hands, and thus, by violating its integrity, set an example to the more unscrupulous, who would, on some frivolous pretext, occasion disturbances which afforded them favourable opportunities for plunder.

On one occasion, I saw a crowd of persons ransacking a tent and store, situated near the "City Hotel," and kept by a Spaniard, who, as it appeared, had, on the preceding evening, murdered a volunteer named Beattie, and then taken refuge in the woods, in the interior of the country In less than half an hour the entire contents of the store had disappeared, their value being probably not less than a thousand dollars. There were only two volunteers present, the remainder of the crowd being composed of half-drunken sailors and the ruffians of the town, who considered this

a fair opportunity for indulging their love of plunder.

It appeared that the unfortunate volunteer had gone into the store in company with another man, on the previous evening; and they were drinking together, when a dispute arose, which resulted in the Spaniard's ordering the two Americans to leave the house. Their blood was up, and they refused to comply; when the Spaniard snatched up a gun, and shot Beattie in the back. But neither the affair of the murder, nor that of robbing the tent, ever became a subject of inquiry; affording another flagrant instance of the negligent manner in which the laws were administered, and of the contempt in which they were held.

Amongst the various emigrants who daily flocked into the city—for each day brought its fresh arrivals—were numerous Chinese, and a very considerable number of Frenchmen, from the Sandwich Islands and from South America. The former had been consigned, with houses and merchandise, to certain Americans in San Francisco, to whom they were

bound by contract, as labourers, to work at a scale of wages very far below the average paid to mechanics and others generally. The houses they brought with them from China, and which they set up where they were wanted, were infinitely superior and more substantial than those erected by the Yankees, being built chiefly of logs of wood, or scantling, from six to eight inches in thickness, placed one on the top of the other, to form the front, rear, and sides; whilst the roofs were constructed on an equally simple and ingenious plan, and were remarkable for durability.

These Chinese had all the air of men likely to prove good citizens, being quiet, inoffensive, and particularly industrious. I once went into an eating-house, kept by one of these people, and was astonished at the neat arrangement and cleanliness of the place, the excellence of the table, and moderate charges. It was styled the "Canton Restaurant;" and so thoroughly Chinese was it in its appointments, and in the manner of service, that one might have easily fancied one's-self in the heart of

the Celestial Empire. The bar-keeper—though he spoke excellent English—was a Chinese, as were also the attendants. Every article that was sold, even of the most trifling kind, was set down, in Chinese characters, as it was disposed of; it being the duty of one of the waiters to attend to this department. This he did very cleverly and quickly, having a sheet of paper for the purpose, on which the article and the price were noted down in Chinese characters, by means of a long, thin brush, moistened in a solution of Indian or Chinese ink. As I had always been given to understand that these people were of dirty habits, I feel it only right to state that I was delighted with the cleanliness of this place, and am gratified to be able to bear testimony to the injustice of such a sweeping assertion.

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

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

Speaking of them reminds me of a "*Café Restaurant*," in San Francisco, kept by a very civil Frenchman, and situated on the way to the Point. I mention it, because I one day made here the most uncomfortable repast it had ever been my lot to sit down to. Yet this was not owing to any lack of attention on the part of the proprietor, to any inferiority in the quality of his provisions, or to any deficiency of culinary skill in their preparation; but simply to the prevalence of the pest to which I have already alluded as invading my own tent, namely, the dust. The house was built chiefly of wood, and had a canvass roof, but this was insufficient to keep out the impalpable particles with which the air was

charged, and which settled upon and insinuated themselves into every article in the place. There was dust on the counter, on the shelves, on the seats, on the decanters, and in them; on the tables, in the salt, on my beef-steak, and in my coffee. There was dust on the polite landlord's cheeks, and in his amiable wife's eyes, which she was wiping with the corner of a dusty apron. I hurried my meal, and was paying my score, when I caught sight of my own face in a dusty-looking and dust-covered glass near the bar, and saw that I too had become covered with it, my entire person being literally encrusted with a coat of powder, from which I experienced considerable difficulty in cleansing myself.

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

Previously to our repairing thither, we at-

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

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

We experienced considerable difficulty in finding the tent; but at last discovered

it, and on entering beheld a melancholy spectacle. On one side of it, stretched upon a few boxes covered with blankets, and which did service as a bed, lay extended the corpse of a tall, finely-formed, and once handsome young man; for disease and death, though they had set their terrible stamp upon his countenance, and distorted it with suffering, had not destroyed the beauty and regularity of his features. His body was black and swollen, and covered with angry blains; and his tongue, which protruded fearfully through his blistered lips, had more than half disappeared before the ravages of the fearful malady that had killed him. He was from New York, and had once been the possessor of considerable property, which, unfortunately losing, he had determined to emigrate to California, in the hope of rapidly acquiring wealth by the practice of his calling as an assayer of gold, concluding that he was likely to procure ready and profitable employment. He left his wife and family behind him, and embarked, with many others, on board the Brooklyn.

But it appeared that they had set sail from New York with an insufficient supply of provisions, of which fact the passengers did not become aware until they had been some time at sea. Nearly the whole of them were, in consequence, attacked with scurvy; but the captain refused to put in at Rio, Valparaiso, and Callao, where the necessary remedies and a fresh stock of provisions might have been procured. Finding him inexorable to the appeal made to his humanity, they made up a purse of 500 dollars, with which they hoped to tempt his cupidity; still he refused. The result was, that five of the passengers perished of this fearful malady, and were thrown overboard; the rest, including the young man in question, were landed at San Francisco in a state verging on dissolution. The deceased had already lost part of his tongue, and turned black before he was set ashore to die; and it seems he had experienced the worst possible treatment at the hands of the captain, who accused him of feigning sickness; and, indeed, had acted with extreme inhumanity to

all, even to the extent of refusing to sanction the adoption of certain remedies to stay the progress of the disease amongst them, although urgently recommended to do so by one of their number, who had received a medical education, and who, if his advice had been followed, might have succeeded in partially arresting it.

By the corpse stood a well-dressed, gentlemanly individual, who, upon ascertaining our business, desired us to seat ourselves on the boxes, which served in lieu of chairs; and going away, returned presently with several other persons, who fully confirmed his statements, and gave us additional and harrowing details of their sufferings. This young man had himself been a sufferer. He was by profession a dentist; and, in proof of his assertions as to the extent to which they had all been afflicted by the scourge, showed us his gums, which were in a sad state of irritation, and horribly disfigured. At his request, as of that of the men whom he had fetched in, we went to see several of the other passengers, who were lying in adjacent tents. We visited some eight or

ten men in all, and found them in the most horrifying condition, their bodies being discoloured and hideously swollen, and many of them nearly rotten, so fearful had been the ravages of the disease.

We signed a paper, recording, as our verdict, that the deceased had died of scurvy, and that his death had been accelerated by neglect on the part of the captain, who, a few days after, was brought to trial. As, however, it turned out that the passengers had engaged to supply themselves with provisions, and had neglected to provide them in sufficient quantities, he escaped punishment.

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

CHAPTER XXVII.

Unhealthiness of San Francisco—Prevalent maladies—Climate of California generally considered—Precautions to be observed by emigrants—Lack of women—Desirableness of female immigration — Mrs. Farnham's scheme frustrated—Advice to young ladies about to emigrate—Dear tooth-drawing—Dolores—The first street-organ in California—Success of enterprise—Competition even in itinerant music—Theatricals in California—Proclamation against foreigners digging in the mines—Consequences—French spirit *versus* American intolerance—The Indians—A murder, and sanguinary retaliation—Population of California.

The town of San Francisco did not appear to me—from the experience I had of it, and from the information I derived at the hands of others who had longer inhabited it—to be particularly healthy. Rheumatism, fever, ague, and diarrhœa were the prevalent maladies during the entire summer season, numerous deaths occurring from them every week. One man

died of ague under rather peculiar and distressing circumstances. He had come down from the mines, and taken up his lodgings at the Buckland, his intention being to return to Oregon by the next vessel bound for that place. He had with him a bag containing 7,000 dollars'-worth of gold, the produce of his toil in the mines. Unhappily for his visions of future happiness, he fell sick of ague, took an over-dose of quinine—which, by the way, he paid an enormous sum for—and died. Executors were appointed to take care of his property; but I never ascertained what became of it. He was a fine, tall, handsome-looking man, and had a wife and large family dependent upon him for support.

We heard a great deal about the ravages the Asiatic cholera was making in the United States; but the general opinion in California was, that this country would escape it, as the high winds prevalent along the coast would blow it past us. I do not know whether science would bear out the theory; but, however that may be, the cholera did not visit us.

As to the climate of California, so many conflicting statements concerning it have been hazarded, that persons who have not visited the country may easily be led into error on this point, and can scarcely hope to form a correct opinion. Independently considered, it may justly be pronounced as the healthiest in the world; for it presents every variety of atmosphere within a great extent of latitude. If the emigrant's object be simply to find a congenial temperature, he can easily gratify his taste; but should circumstances compel him to reside in a locality the air of which is not suited to his particular constitution, the evil effect of living in it can only be effectually remedied by a due attention to diet and dress. Too many persons neglect, or scorn to observe the requisite precautions on this head, exposing themselves to the sudden extremes of heat and cold peculiar to the climate, and, in their reckless pursuit after gold—heedless of every other consideration—contract diseases during their labours, which, if they do not always prove fatal, so undermine the

frame and constitution, as to render even an opulent life a burden. Thousands of emigrants, Americans, and others, have thus been cut off by disease, since the discovery of the mines.

I have no hesitation in asserting that the neglecting of proper precautions on the part of the miners, has, by causing a large mortality amongst them, tended to propagate the belief that the climate is in itself unhealthy. When, however, California shall have become thoroughly settled, and an abundance of good houses, of *adobè* or wood, shall have sprung up in its towns; when the people shall have returned to the legitimate pursuits incidental to a healthy state of society; when agriculture shall be practised more extensively, and the search after gold no longer be the absorbing passion of the emigrants, there will be fewer railers against the climate. Even in San Francisco, where, during one entire season of the year, the weather is more intolerable and severe than in any other town along the whole coast, the carrying out of a regular system of building, drainage, and ventila-

tion, will do much to render a residence here agreeable; though at the present moment it presents only an aspect of confusion, wretchedness, and discomfort.

It is also to be hoped that the tone of society will soon be altered for the better, by an influx of the gentler sex, whose influence alone can soften down the ruggedness of manner invariably observable where their presence cheers not, and their smiles are wanting; whose affections alone possess the power of weaning men from the pursuit of unlawful pleasures, and indulgence in enervating vices. Hundreds, nay, thousands, who now know of no home save the groggery and the gambling-table, would be glad to abandon them for the sweeter enjoyments of a domestic hearth, cheered and enlivened by the society of a partner, and the lively prattle of innocent children. Under the gentle influence which woman knows so well how to exercise, the brawler would become a quiet citizen; the spendthrift, careful; the indolent, industrious; the drunkard, sober; the gambler, a gamester

only for domestic bliss: for all would then have a mistress dearer to them than dissipation—an object to love, to live, and to labour for.

I am satisfied that much of the crime and lawlessness that is prevalent in California—particularly in towns like San Francisco, where the ruder sex are congregated exclusively and in large multitudes — is attributable to the want of the humanizing presence of women. In San Francisco there were about ten thousand males, and scarcely a hundred females; for, although in many parts of California the latter outnumber the former, the national prejudice against colour was too strong for legitimate amalgamation to take place. The attention of the people in the United States had been already directed to the question of encouraging female emigration to this country, as a means—although certainly an inadequate one—of relieving the industrial pressure on all classes in the manufacturing towns. Thousands of young females, who were earning a bare subsistence by their

needle, or in the factories, or by exercise of the very few callings adapted to their sex, might, it was considered, be advantageously transplanted here, and prove the means of entirely changing the aspect of society; whilst they themselves would be removed from poverty into comparative comfort. So many obstacles presented themselves, however, that to carry out the experiment on a scale at all commensurate with the exigences of the case seemed literally hopeless. The passage round Cape Horn was so long and tedious, that it deterred; and the journey across the Isthmus was far too expensive for the limited means of those who felt disposed to venture. Nevertheless, one lady, a Mrs. Farnham, formerly the matron of Sing-Sing prison, well known by her writings on prison discipline, and admirably qualified, by her experience and knowledge, to ensure the success of such an undertaking, had striven hard to induce several young women to emigrate; and, failing in this, shipped herself, her two children, and a servant, intending to come and judge for herself, then to return and speak

from her own experience. In consequence, however, of a disagreement between her and the captain, she landed at Valparaiso, and returned home; and thus, perhaps, was a noble design frustrated through a petty squabble.

But the news, nevertheless, reached San Francisco that the lady was actually on her way, with a large cargo of houris; and expectation stood on tiptoe, awaiting their arrival. The excitement was immense, and the disappointment proportionate, when the real facts became known. I verily believe there was more drunkenness, more gambling, more fighting, and more of everything that was bad, that night, than had ever before occurred in San Francisco within any similar space of time.

If the interesting cargo had arrived, no doubt exists but that the whole of the young women would have done well in the various occupations to which they were adapted, and which fall so especially within their province. Their services were required in so many ways, that they could have procured their own

terms, and would have realized as much money as the male speculators. Laundresses, to wit —male ones—were charging at the rate of nine dollars per dozen, or six shillings per shirt. It is true that the female emigrants would have had at first to encounter many hardships, perhaps actual privations, besides other domestic inconveniences, with annoyances and discomforts peculiar to the circumstances, and requiring, on their part, the exercise of no ordinary share of prudence and industry. Yet, under proper regulations and due protection, their prospects could not but have been materially improved; and, even in the absence of the latter, it is no compliment to virtue to assert that it possesses the power of enforcing respect for itself. Whilst expressing my opinions thus freely on so important a subject, I must not be understood as asserting that every class of females would do well in California. Young ladies, whose accomplishments have been confined to acquiring proficiency in music, or in fancy-work, would do better to remain at home.

California is no place for them. They who make up their minds to encounter the perils and the discomforts of emigrating into this country, must renounce a life of ease, and come fully persuaded that, if they desire to acquire a competency, nothing but hard work is before them.

To return, however, to my own affairs. I found that, though I was earning money rapidly, it was at the expense of my health, and that I must soon determine to lie by and recruit my strength, or else return home. But the influx of strangers, whilst it increased my business, forbade me to relax in my efforts, lest I should be shut out from the field by more active—or at least healthier—competitors. I thought of going to Pueblo, which was milder, in respect of its climate, or to Monterey, which, during the summer months, was pleasant enough; but in neither of these places would my services have been in demand. There was Sacramento city, again; but numbers of persons were daily quitting it, sufferers from fever, ague, and mosquitoes. Under

these circumstances, I determined to return home, after remaining a while longer in San Francisco. But, as I felt unable to carry on so extensive a business as we had now got, I effected an amicable separation from my partner, and, having sold our tent for two hundred dollars, hired a small room, where I devoted myself exclusively to the less laborious branches of painting; yet still receiving more orders than I could execute. I was, however, fortunate enough to retain the services of a man who had formerly worked for me, and who, being a person of talent, greatly contributed to my success. Still, the life I led was wretchedly uncomfortable, and I began to feel the effects of constant exposure to the inclemency of the weather, and of the want of regular rest; for, during my whole stay in California, I had not slept more than one week on a bed. It was almost impossible to keep on one's feet, out of doors, the wind blowing fiercely and without cessation; and, having exposed myself more carelessly than usual to its influence, I suffered such severe

tortures from the toothache, that I was unable to proceed with my occupations, and was compelled, though reluctantly, to go to a dentist. He told me that it would be useless to try and stuff the tooth that annoyed me; so I suffered him to extract it; and paid him sixteen dollars for the operation!

Finding that the sufferings I endured were incapacitating me for exertion, I endeavoured to obtain a few days' respite from my occupations, in the hope that a little change might do me good. Hiring a horse for the day, at the moderate sum of twelve dollars, I rode into the country. But the neighbourhood of San Francisco is by no means of an attractive character, and I derived but little pleasure from these excursions. Pushing on, one day, to the Mission of Dolores, of which I had heard such glowing accounts, I was disappointed to find it an insignificant Californian village, without any sort of accommodation for travellers. The only house that pretended to the character of an inn, *La Cabesa del*

Toro, or Bull's Head, could provide me with neither dinner nor bed.

Dolores is famous for bull-fighting, horse-racing, and gambling; and, being much frequented by the citizens, I was surprised that some enterprising Yankee had not established a good hotel there. Being the only place to which the inhabitants of San Francisco can resort, without travelling a great distance, I am confident that Dolores will ere long become a thriving little town.

Whilst stopping here, I saw a smart-looking Yankee and a Spanish girl married by the priest, whose words were interpreted to the bridegroom as the ceremony proceeded: the lady was of rather a dark complexion, but extremely pretty; and, although she knew scarcely a word of English, and the bridegroom knew still less of Spanish, it was evident, from the eloquence of the glances that passed between them, that they were at no loss to make themselves understood.

I returned to San Francisco with a large party, amongst whom was my last partner

A SERENADE—UPPER CALIFORNIA.

and Jack Power, one of the sporting characters of the country. Jack had been a volunteer; and, on the disbanding of the regiment, becoming infected with the excitement and adventurous character of the wild life which he had led since his arrival in the country, had devoted himself entirely to gambling and horsemanship, in both of which accomplishments he greatly excelled. Previous to my becoming acquainted with him, he had been up to Stocton, and in an incredibly short time had amassed, at his favourite pursuits, about fifty thousand dollars, the greater part of which he had subsequently lost. No matter how low the state of his finances, he was never without a good horse, caparisoned in the true Californian fashion; and that on which he was now mounted was one of the most beautiful I had ever seen. It had, however, this striking peculiarity, that it would never gallop straight forward towards any given point, but would advance in a sort of sidelong canter, very pleasing to behold, but requiring great skill on the part of the rider to maintain

his seat. In this eccentric movement of the animal Power took great delight, for it afforded him opportunities of displaying his superior horsemanship. In addition to his other accomplishments, he was also an excellent performer on the banjo; and one evening, with three or four others, gave a "nigger" concert in the dining-saloon of the Parker House, which was suitably arranged for the occasion; and, although the tickets for admission were three dollars each, the attraction of our Nimrod's celebrity ensured a numerous attendance.

Apropos of music, I shall never forget the odd sensations that I experienced on hearing the first barrel-organ ever played in the streets of San Francisco. I happened to be seated, at the time, in the bar-room of one of the hotels, in conversation with a friend, when the sounds of an instrument associated with so many familiar recollections fell like the strains of some long-forgotten but cherished voice upon my ears.

I rushed out to behold the adventurous Savoyard who had traversed half the globe to

charm the savage natures of this wild and lawless region with the dulcet tones of his instrument. There he stood, an admirable specimen of his class; a bright and merry smile playing upon his tanned, but handsome features; while his eye wandered round, in arch expectancy, on the faces of the crowd by whom he was surrounded. The dear little automatons, that had excited my wonder and admiration as a child, were pirouetting, as of old, upon the instrument, and the attendant monkey clambering from post to pillar, grinning his satisfaction at the numberless presents of fruit or biscuit that he received.

I sighed as I reflected that the fortunate Savoyard who had been the first to venture to the shores of the new El-Dorado, and upon whom its treasures were now lavishly showered, in pieces of silver, by the bystanders, was probably but the precursor of a shoal of those light-hearted, but ill-treated little beings, who are destined to toil and wear out a miserable existence, for the enrichment of their harsh and unfeeling taskmasters.

This Columbus of street-musicians became a person of considerable importance in San Francisco, and was handsomely rewarded for his performances, wherever he went. Never, probably, had one of his class attained such high consideration. The melodious strains of his instrument never failed to arouse the enthusiasm of the home-sick; whilst the tricks of the monkey served to amuse the leisure of the rough miners, who were incapable of entering into the feelings inspired by his music. He was admitted into all the hotels; and many a rough jig or reel was improvisated to music never arranged to such a profane measure—the *arias* of Bellini and Donizetti being quick-timed, to suit the exigencies of a planxty or Sir Roger de Coverley. Luckily for him, there were no coppers in the town; and the showers of silver pieces that rewarded his efforts must have astonished as well as enriched him.

But, alas, the subsequent career of the Savoyard was not destined to prove an exception to the usual course of mundane prospe-

rity. Some performers on wind and stringed instruments arriving from the States, he was thrown completely into the shade; and his visits to his old haunts became less and less frequent. At last, he disappeared altogether: and another melancholy proof of the ingratitude of human nature was furnished by the fact, that those to whose enjoyment he had so largely ministered scarcely bestowed a thought upon his memory; for the novelty of his music had already worn off, and the town had become wearied of daily hearing the same airs. What ultimately became of him I am unable to say: cupidity growing upon him with riches, he may have tried his luck at the mines; or, more probably, lured by the triumphs he had achieved in his art, went "starring" it round the country.

Shortly afterwards, several Spanish singers and a few dancers gave a performance in the town, which proved a complete failure. The *artistes* were persons of talent, and complained bitterly of the want of taste displayed by the Americans. But the cause of their

failure was evident. The entertainment consisted chiefly of selections from celebrated Italian operas; and it certainly could not be reasonably expected that the rough denizens of San Francisco should appreciate this character of music. Although their want of success was also in some degree attributed to the high price of the tickets (five dollars each), I do not think that it at all influenced it; for in every instance in which any thoroughly English or Yankee amusement had been introduced, no matter how high the prices of admission, it had been eagerly resorted to; the people in the town being literally driven to their wits' end to find some innocent means of enjoyment. From the first moment that the project of erecting a theatre here was started, I felt convinced that it would effect a considerable reformation in the habits of the population, and that the gambling-houses and grog-stores would lose at least one half of their *habitués*. The result of the erection of the theatre here has fully borne out this conclusion; and if the ma-

nagement can only secure the services of a few additional actors, of even second or third-rate reputation, the speculation will prove immensely successful.

Whilst on this subject, I may as well mention, that the first theatrical performances that ever took place in California were given in Pueblo de Los Angelos, by some of the volunteers, with such scenery, costumes, and music, as the country and their own ingenuity could supply them. The next came off at Sonoma, where several of the same company of Thespians made their appearance. These were, of course, mere amateur attempts; but still they are interesting, as serving to note the progress of this amusement. The performances were, in general, well attended. At the close of the season, in August, 1848, the "Golden Farmer," "The Omnibus," and a Russian comedy called "Feodora," translated from the German of Kotzebue by a resident of Sonoma, were the last pieces played. Amongst the company performing at present in San Francisco, there are few, if

any, names of artists favourably known in Europe or the United States. The risk of so long a voyage appeared so great, that few persons in the receipt of a decent income could be prevailed upon to run it.

During my residence in San Francisco, General Smith, in coming up the coast to supersede Colonel Mason as Governor of California, issued a proclamation, to the effect that no foreigners would be allowed to work in the mines. This, however, had but little effect; and hundreds flocked daily into San Francisco from Chili, Peru, and the Sandwich Islands. The influx of strangers created great discontent, both in the "diggins" and the larger towns, as the enormous increase of the population interfered everywhere with the interests of the Americans. On the North and South American Forks, the Oregon men, and some of the Yankees, who had arrived by water, came to the determination to drive them from that mine. A meeting was held at Sutter's Mill, to decide upon the most summary means to be adopted for the accom-

plishment of their object. The strongest arguments were used on the occasion in favour of their immediate expulsion; the Chilians, Sonoreans, Peruvians, and Mexicans, being more particularly designated as having no right to work in the mines. Some of the persons present at the meeting objected to this measure being carried out; amongst whom, I believe, were several traders. This is not surprising, however; the latter regarding it as a matter of indifference whether they dealt with Yankees or Californians, provided they could sell their goods. The meeting resolved to give all the above denominations of foreigners warning to leave, in the course of the day; and, in case they failed to do so, to drive them away by force of arms. The intimation was given, and these unfortunate persons immediately took their departure. Some of the miners, however, not satisfied with this wholesale proscription, endeavoured to drive away the Europeans also. There were, in a retired part of these "diggins" at the time, four Frenchmen; three of whom, apprehen-

sive of consequences, expressed themselves in favour of leaving, but the fourth persuaded them to stay. When the Yankees came round to drive them off, this man said that he had been eleven years a resident of the United States, and that he would not budge a step, as he considered himself as good a citizen as any in the "diggins." They might shoot him, or do with him as they pleased, but he was determined not to leave. This exhibition of spirit, on his part, was duly appreciated, and the party were allowed to remain. During all the subsequent disturbances, in various parts of the mining districts, there was a wide distinction made between the Europeans generally, and persons tinctured with Spanish blood; a strong proof that, notwithstanding our complete triumph over the Mexicans in the late war, and the return of peace, a feeling of bitter prejudice and animosity still existed. When it is considered, however, that from these Spanish races came an immense majority of the foreigners in the country, who interfered more particularly with the

interests of American citizens, it is not by any means astonishing that these sentiments should have revived in all their force, and been the occasion of much suffering, and, in some subsequent instances, of bloodshed. The Alta-Californians themselves, who are entitled, as natives of that portion of the country ceded by treaty to the United States, to a participation in all the rights and privileges enjoyed by the Americans, were greatly injured by this harsh yet necessary measure. Indeed, I have heard many of them say that they had been deterred from going to the mines by the apprehension that they would be mistaken for Chilians, and their lives and property sacrificed.

The Indians occasionally gave great annoyance to the miners, both Americans and Spaniards. I have been assured, I know not with what truth, that their hatred of the latter is far greater, owing to the persecution they had suffered at their hands. But they inflicted some dreadful outrages upon the former, on various occasions. On the Middle

Fork, about seven miles above the "Spanish Bar," a party of Oregon men happened to be encamped. Two of them, not thinking the spot they had selected sufficiently rich, went "prospecting," as it is termed, up the river for a better place. When they came back, they found seven of their companions weltering in their blood, and all their provisions gone, with the exception of a little flour and biscuit that lay strewn upon the ground.

These two men went to the mill to report the circumstance; and a party of forty men, headed by Captain M'Kay, himself an Indian by birth, took their rifles and went in pursuit of the murderers to a *rancherie*, about ten miles farther north. The place to which they proceeded contains about twenty rude dwellings, made of brushwood and sticks, each of them large enough to contain three or four men and their squaws. On coming in sight, the Americans found the *rancherie* crowded with about three hundred Indians. The former immediately discharged their rifles, killing about thirty of them; and the rest scampered

off towards the mountains, with the exception of seven men and about forty squaws, whom they took prisoners, and brought to the Mill for trial.

One of the women declaring that these seven men had been engaged in the late murders, the latter were about to be executed, when the ringleader, suddenly making signs to his companions, and uttering a shout, they all burst through the guard surrounding them, and fled. Three of them were shot while endeavouring to cross the river; another was stabbed by an American, while running up a hill on the other side; and the rest, amongst whom was the chief of the party, made their escape.

I have said nothing as yet with respect to the population of California, the continual influx of strangers rendering the subject mere matter of speculation. Judging from my own personal observation, I should say that there were not more than 25,000 inhabitants in both the upper and lower countries, previous to the discovery of the gold mines.

Within a couple of years, the population of Alta-California has increased so enormously, as almost to outstrip calculation. There is no possible means of taking a correct census; but still we have certain data, from which we may arrive at a tolerably exact estimate for the present year. Since the Americans first took full possession of Alta-California, the number of inhabitants had been gradually increasing, many having been induced to settle there by the prospect of a better system of government than had existed under the Mexicans. But the gold-mania soon caused a large flow of emigration; and we find that, at the commencement of 1849, the population of the upper country alone amounted to nearly that number. If we examine the statistics furnished with respect to the arrivals in Upper California during the year 1849, we shall find an increase of about 95,000. To this must be added about 9,000, as the population of the lower country. It will not appear strange that the latter place has not had any considerable accession to the number

of its inhabitants, if we reflect that as yet it has not been generally supposed rich in the precious metals, and that the narrow policy of its government is calculated rather to drive foreigners away, than entice them to settle within its boundaries. I am confident, however, that the great mineral wealth geologists assert it to possess, will eventually attract great attention, and render it a desirable place of settlement. Indeed, it requires no extraordinary degree of intelligence to foresee that it must ere long fall into the possession of the United States, or of the Alta-Californians.

A great sensation has recently been created here by the discovery of veins of gold in the quartz rock in the mines, the proportion of gold being, in many instances, that of 1·50 to every pound of rock. The greater number of the present class of miners will, however, reap no benefit from it. In my opinion, the time is fast approaching when these persons will find it impossible to earn more than sufficient to support life by this miserable drudgery;

while enormous fortunes will be realized by those companies and capitalists who can bring chemical and mechanical agencies to bear upon the more productive parts of the soil. For such as these, California will be indeed inexhaustible.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Political excitement—Preliminary steps towards the adoption of a constitution—Meeting of the Convention—The slavery question—Arrival of an important political personage—Determination to return to the States—Jemmy Twitcher—Parental interest for a prodigal son—A Michael Angelo in search of fortune—A Frenchman in search of his wife.

Notwithstanding the excitement continually kept up in the public mind by the reports of fresh discoveries in the mines, or of remarkable instances of individual success in the working of them, the attention of the Americans soon became directed towards the discussion and settlement of those political questions, which, wherever they congregate and locate, will always form the chief object and business of life with a people devoted to the propagandism of republican opinions. It would be difficult for the cooler headed and

less progressive European, to picture to himself the intense anxiety that existed here, amongst all classes of the population, for the formation and adoption of a constitution for California that would reconcile the conflicting prejudices of the two great parties with the existing circumstances and future prospects of the country. For a lengthened period, owing to the difficulty of arriving at anything like unanimity, as well as to the disorderly and lawless state of our new territory, it had been considered utterly impossible to take even the most simple preparatory steps towards effecting that object. Numerous obstacles presented themselves, in the divisions into which the people had split, respecting the nomination of candidates as delegates to the Convention. Those who appeared most eligible, were either designated the pets of the aristocratic, or of the ultra-democratic or disorderly party; and at every preliminary meeting a great deal of unnecessary and rather personal discussion took place, as to their respective merits, which of course greatly

retarded the attainment of the desired object. Owing, however, to the efforts of the more intelligent and educated amongst the citizens, who saw in its accomplishment the only chance of safety for the country, the delegates were at last nominated from the different towns; and the new Convention assembled in Monterey shortly previous to my departure. From the character of the men of whom this body was for the most part composed, I at once felt assured that such a constitution would be framed by them, and presented to the Home Government for acceptance, as could not fail to be creditable to a free and enlightened people.

As to the admission of slavery into the territory, respecting which a considerable degree of apprehension had been manifested, both at home and abroad, no one who had been any length of time in the country felt the least doubt as to the course they would pursue. Owing to the fact of there being many Southern gentlemen of considerable influence in California, it was at first thought that they

would strain every nerve for its introduction. The contrary, however, soon became evident. Many of those men, finding, on mature consideration, that it would be impossible to carry out their views, had the good sense to come round to those of the opposite party. The only fear entertained was, that the representatives of the Northern and Southern States might, in the determined pertinacity with which they advocated the interests of their respective constituents, so delay the final settlement of this great question, as to keep the new settlers in a state of prolonged suspense and anxiety. Previous to the year 1847, the Federal Government had decided the question of slavery in its territories; but it was subsequently discovered, by a junta of politicians at Washington, that this was an act of interference wholly unauthorized by the constitution—that, in fact, all the acts, from that relating to the North-Western Boundary, in 1789, to that for the Oregon territory, in 1847, were mere usurpations, and that the people alone had the power to introduce or

tolerate slavery. Their object was apparent: they calculated on inducing the people of California to embrace this institution; but they had mistaken the spirit of the times; for, notwithstanding all the Southern influence that was brought to bear upon it, the people were unanimously determined on its exclusion.

It must be owned that, in arriving at this decision, the Americans took as much an interested as a philanthropical view of the question; and I am not prepared to say, that had they held possession of the lower country, greater difficulties might not have presented themselves to its solution. No class of white men can there perform the labour necessary for the thorough cultivation of the land, and the working of the mineral resources in which I feel confident it abounds. In Upper California, the case is altogether different. There, slave labour would be brought into direct competition with that of the Americans themselves; and, as the latter are now more than sufficient in number for every agricultural and mechanical requirement, the consequences

would eventually be highly injurious to the interests of the white population.

Whilst the fever of political excitement agitated the minds of the inhabitants of San Francisco, the arrival by one of the steamers of a personage of some importance in the North American and European cities, but until now unfamiliar to the inhabitants of San Francisco, caused no slight sensation and amusement amongst us. Let the reader picture to himself the ludicrous effect of one of the newsboys of New York suddenly presenting himself on the Plaza, with a large bundle of the daily and weekly journals of that city, and dinning our ears with cries to which we had long been unaccustomed. The idea was a happy one; and the adventurous little fellow, having disposed of his whole stock of papers at prices averaging from one to two dollars each, retired well pleased with the result of his experiment.

I had been gradually making up my mind to return to the United States; and the period had now arrived for putting my determination

into execution. Perhaps a brief explanation as to the motives that influenced me in abandoning a country to which the eyes of so many are turned, as a second "Land of Promise," may serve as a lesson to those who allow the imagination to exercise too great an influence over their actions, and who may be induced to give way to hopes that are based on illusions.

It is unquestionable, that in no other part of the world can money be more easily acquired; but, when we take into account the sufferings endured in its acquisition, and the relatively high prices paid for all the necessaries of life, it is very much to be doubted whether the same amount of industry and self-denial would not obtain equal results in more civilized countries. There were, besides, many circumstances that foreshadowed to me a future replete with difficulties and privations. The winter was fast setting in; and I felt that I could not pursue my avocations continually exposed to the heavy rains which were certain to deluge the town. The

success that attended my first efforts had, besides, exposed me to competition; and, in the keen struggle for existence that I knew must inevitably ensue amongst a population increasing at a ratio without parallel, I felt that I exposed myself to the chances of ruining my health in the pursuit of a chimera. Shortly before leaving, I had numberless applications for employment from persons in my line, even in the very best part of the year for mining; and I knew from this and many other concurrent facts, that during the winter my trade would decrease to such an extent, that I should be obliged to support myself on my previous earnings. I subsequently learned that all my anticipations had been fully realized; the tide of population that flowed into San Francisco became so enormous, that the prices of all the necessaries of life almost doubled in value; while that of labour descended in an inverse ratio. The streets were deluged with water; and those who pursued any sort of mechanical occupation, were compelled to work up to their knees in fetid

pools. Heavy boots, that could be previously procured for eight dollars, now rose in value to ninety-six dollars a pair; a convincing proof, not of the wealth, but of the wretchedness of the place; it being impossible to attend to one's pursuits without these necessary articles.

From the prices that I have occasionally mentioned, people may run away with the notion that they are uniformly extravagant as regards all descriptions of merchandise. Such, however, is not the fact. During the latter part of my residence here, I have seen many articles sold at a trifling advance on the New York prices, and some at a complete sacrifice. The fluctuations in the value of commodities are so extraordinary, that I have frequently seen large fortunes made by the same articles in the course of a month; but next summer prices will no doubt become steadier, and must ultimately find their level.

My readers are doubtless curious to know whether, in this land of almost fabulous wealth, there are any persons so unfavoured by fortune

as to realize those pictures of misery and despair that often turn the heart sick within the precincts of the crowded cities of the Old World. Yes, strange as it may seem, such scenes were far from being unfamiliar to us; the hand of the suicide often terminating an existence which had hoped to find long denied success in the multiplied chances of this new field of speculation; while hundreds have met with the characteristic fate of the miser, gaunt starvation overtaking them in the midst of piles of gold —a death amidst abundance—an end, of all others, the most horrible—their bones being found rotting in the mountain ravines of a wild and desolate region, thousands of leagues distant from the home and country which they had probably only learned to prize, when the wealth they had succeeded in amassing had become impotent to prolong their lives, even for one short hour.

As I sat smoking a cigar in one of the hotels of the town, shortly before my departure, I happened to overhear the following rather amusing conversation amongst a group of

boisterous young fellows, who were quizzing the notorious Twitcher on the subject of a letter which he had just received from home.

"I say, Jemmy," said a tall, rakish-looking fellow, with his hat set jauntily on one side of his head, "you must let us hear that letter from your respectable parent; it's capital."

"I'm hanged if I do!" replied Twitcher, with an air of affected reluctance, belied by a smile that played round the corners of his mouth. "You are always pestering me about that letter; this is the tenth time you've asked me to read it."

"Well, give it to me, and I'll read it. It does one's heart good to find such simplicity in this wicked world. Oh, Jemmy! the old man little knows what an infernal scoundrel you are."

Twitcher, little affected by the compliment, produced a dirty and crumpled piece of paper, which the other read aloud, amidst the laughter of the company. It ran, as nearly as I can remember, in the following terms:—

"Dear Jim—I take this opportunity to write you a bit of a note, hoping it will find you well, as I am at present. We're very anxious about you since you left, but have some comfort in the thought that you are doing so well. [*A laugh.*] I would go out myself, but am too old; and besides, the voyage is expensive, and I couldn't sell the blind horse—[*another laugh*]—but I'm doing purty well with the cart, thank God. Howsomever, I might be doing better; but that's neither here nor there. We have wonderful news here from the mines. I was talking the other day with a young chap who had been all through them, and he told me a heap of curious things that I didn't believe, at first, was true; but he offered to take his Bible oath, an' I didn't think then I could disbelieve him. He said, says he, 'When I was in a place called the Divil's Diggins, by reason of its being such a horrid, gloomy lookin' gulche, the winter came on, an' we hadn't anything left to eat but a prairie dog we'd killed two days afore. But one of my companions was loath

to touch it; so he goes over to another tent, where they wasn't quite so short, but still purty hard up. 'I saw a chap squatted on the ground,' says he, 'going like a streak of lightnin' into a dish of beans;' and he offered him first a pound, thin two, and at last, after bein' refused every time, twenty pounds of goold for the dish, which the other chap sold at that price.' Send me word, when you write, if these things is true. I suppose you'll be a rich man, Jemmy, when you come back; for I don't think you can help it; but, at any rate, come back soon. We're anxious to see you home. Come back. *If you hav'nt got much*, come with what *you've got*—we're all a dying to see you. Come back. Don't be too covetious. Remember, enough's as good as a feast. Come back with what you've got. Give my love to Bob.

"Your affectionate father,

"ISAAC TWITCHER."

The conclusion of this characteristic epistle elicited shouts of laughter from the company;

and Twitcher himself appeared to relish its contents as much as his companions.

"Let me see, now," said he, putting his hands into his pockets, "how much I *have* got. Just twenty-five cents, by G—! A nice sum for a fellow to return home with to a father who's been hearing such a yarn as that about the dish of beans. But no matter. I calculate the old boy will have to wait some time before he catches me at home again. By the by, I may as well have a drink with what I have got; so here goes." Jemmy put down his last "shiner" upon the counter, and continued. "The old hunks thinks, I'll be bound, that I'm worth fifty thousand dollars; and darn me if it wouldn't be a pity to let him know the truth, he must be so happy at the notion. No; I'll let him live on in ignorance; for he loves money, and it will keep him in good spirits, and perhaps lengthen his days. I own I should like to see the old rascal again, although he gave me many a tidy licking when I was at home with him."

"Jemmy," said another of the party, "you

are a pleasant fellow, and a smart one, into the bargain; but, hang me, if I think you'll ever save as much as will carry you back by the steamer."

"What's the odds?" returned Twitcher. "I came out here to see life; and, if the worst comes to the worst, I'll stick in California."

Finding it necessary one day to purchase some architectural designs, to aid me in the preparation of plans that I had contracted to furnish, I directed my steps towards a crowd of tents in the centre of the town, which formed a sort of "broker's alley," and where I thought it possible I might find them. I visited several of these places without success, and was abandoning the search in despair, when I met a friend, who told me that he could take me to a place where I might possibly obtain what I required. I accordingly accompanied him to a tent, where I found a sickly looking young foreigner, rather fashionably dressed, who, on learning my business, opened a large portfolio full of engravings, lithographs, and original drawings, many of

the former being from the works of Raphael, Claude Lorraine, Poussin, Guido, &c., with some of the best specimens of Jullien's beautiful studies *aux deux crayons*. The original drawings were by the person I saw before me, and struck me with astonishment. I saw at a glance that he had been a close student in some of the best of the Continental schools, and that he possessed genius of no common order.

His history was the old story of the painter's life—early enthusiasm—unsuccessful struggles—a broken spirit. Unable, by the closest application, to earn more than a bare subsistence, he had laid aside his profession in disgust—wandered to the coast of South America in search of better fortunes; and there, hearing of the discovery of the gold mines, had made the best of his way to San Francisco. A being more unfitted for the rough trials and privations that awaited him in the *placers* could scarcely be found; for, judging from his attenuated and hectic appearance, the seeds of consumption were

deeply sown in him. Still, however, his gallant spirit could not bring itself to yield to the symptomatic warnings of disease; and he spoke in cheerful and hopeful terms of the chances that lay before him, and of the probability of his soon returning to his native land with means sufficient to enable him to pursue his profession, without his mind being disturbed by the harrowing toils and cares of a daily-struggle for existence. I had not the heart to dispel these bright visions of the poor young artist, by relating to him the discouraging results of my own experience; so paying him down without discussion the price that he demanded (sixteen dollars), I carried off with me a valuable portfolio of ornamental and architectural designs.

Ere I conclude this chapter, which brings me to the eve of my departure from San Francisco, I must not omit to mention a little incident, which, though common-place enough in itself, will serve to illustrate the reckless spirit of adventure that drives so many emigrants to the shores of this country.

Passing through the streets one day, I was accosted by a smart-looking Frenchman, who endeavoured to make me understand something in broken English, in which, owing to his almost entire innocence of the language, all that I could comprehend were the words "Madame Alphonse!"

"*Que voulez vous dire, Monsieur?*" said I, at length relieving him from his difficulty, which, I own, had somewhat amused me.

"*Dieu! vous parlez Français, Monsieur! Qu'elle chance. Je cherche l'addresse d'une dame, Madame Alphonse, enfin, mon épouse, qui demeure a ce qu'on dit dans cette ville.*"

"*Vous êtes nouvellement arrivé? comment se fait il que vous ne connaissiez pas l'addresse de votre femme.*"

M. Alphonse appeared rather embarrassed by the question, but, immediately recovering his self-possession, replied—

"*Oui, Monsieur; je ne suis arrivé qu' hier. Le fait est que les affaires étaient si mauvaises à Paris, depuis la revolution de Février, qu'il n'y avait pas de quoi gagner du*

pain. Moi je suis tailleur, Monsieur, et ma femme est blanchisseuse de fin. Son cousin Jean Bigot, le carrossier, (vous le connaissez sans doute) étant venu un jour nous annoncer son départ pour San Francisco, nouveau pays de Cocagne ou on n'avait qu'à se baisser pour ramasser de l'or, ma petite écervelée de femme se mit en tête de l'accompagner, m'assurant que les blanchisseuses de fin gagnaient dans ce pays de l'argent gros comme elle et me promettant surtout que sitôt qu'elle serait bien casée elle m'ecrirait de venir la rejoindre. Mais fichtre! le temps se passait et n'entendant pas parler d'elle, je suis venu sans attendre plus long temps lui ménageant l'agréable surprise de me voir arriver! J'ai vendu mon mobilier, disposé de tous les fonds que j'avais pour acheter une pacotille, et me voilà à sa recherche. Vous pouvez, sans doute, m'indiquer son addresse?"

Smiling at the simplicity of the Frenchman, who, it was plain, had been made to play the part of the "*mari complaisant*," in a common enough incident of Parisian life, I

assured him that I was unable to furnish him with any sort of clue to the whereabouts of the lady. He seemed very much surprised at this, being duly impressed with the talents and importance of his *chère épouse*, and fully convinced that the whole town of San Francisco must have been equally cognizant of her merits. Feeling rather interested in the *dénouement* of the story, I offered to conduct him to my own tailor's (a countryman of his), where, if Madame were really in the town, he might possibly obtain some information respecting her.

On our way to this person's residence, a small square tent, with the words "*Bavon, tailleur, de Paris*," proudly emblazoned upon the front, we were overtaken by a German, who, it seems, had arrived in the same vessel with M. Alphonse, and who, it subsequently turned out, was a lady's shoemaker. The Frenchman requested him to accompany us; and he accordingly walked with us to M. Bavon's.

To the anxious inquiries of M. Alphonse,

as to whether he could tell him anything of Madame or her cousin, "*un grand beau garçon, avec des cheveux blonds, et des moustaches rouges, qui se nommait Bigot,*" M. Bavon replied, that he had never heard of them, and that he very much doubted if any such persons were living in the town. The countenance of the poor fellow became sadly troubled at this intelligence; but, soon recovering his composure, he put some fresh questions to M. Bavon respecting the chances of his trade in San Francisco. The latter replied, that it would be folly for any man to enter into the business, as the people, generally speaking, preferred ready-made clothing, having but little time to wait for the execution of orders; that the little trade he himself possessed consisted principally in making alterations, it being useless to try and compete with the ready-made clothing stores; and that, were it not for a few regular customers he had amongst some gentlemen of the town, who liked to appear in the European style, he would have been obliged to

shut up shop long since. This put the finishing stroke to poor M. Alphonse, whose hopes of recovering his truant spouse, and of realizing advantageously the contents of his little *pacotille*, were crushed at one fell blow.

When we left the tent, I was fairly overwhelmed with questions by the two foreigners, to neither of whom my answers conveyed much encouragement. The shoemaker was evidently the poorer of the two; and, although I foresaw that the information I had to give him would cause him dreadful disappointment, I felt that it would be rendering him a service to disabuse his mind of the illusions under which he laboured. I told him that I had never seen more than one good shoemaker at work in the country, and that was at the mission of San José; that it was impossible to obtain a supply of tanned leather for the manufacture of boots and shoes; and that, even had he the material to work upon, he could never compete with the Yankees, who imported immense quantities of them from the States, selling them in summer

almost at as low a price as in New York. The poor fellow looked terribly downcast at what he heard; and, in order to reassure him, I added, that, if I was in his place, I would turn my attention to something else. He was a strong, healthy man, and could easily find profitable employment, if he only took the trouble to seek it. I believe that he had the good sense to follow my advice.

The Frenchman had brought out a large quantity of goods, chiefly clothing; but, finding the town already overstocked with such articles, and the little ready money he had with him fast running out, he was compelled to dispose of them at a ruinous sacrifice, and went up shortly after to the mines. What ultimately became of him I am unable to say; although, I must own, I feel rather curious to learn whether he is still *a la recherche de Madame Alphonse.*

CHAPTER XXIX.

Departure from San Francisco—A moral deduced from painful experience—Penalties paid for the pursuit of wealth — O'Reilly on his return from the land of gold — News of old friends—Dr. Freünd in a scrape—Riot on board—First trip of the California steamer to Panama.

1*st September*, 1849. With what feelings of joy and thankfulness do I again find myself tossing on the broad, undulating bosom of the Pacific !—on board an ill-appointed and crowded steamer, it is true ; but, for the nonce, a model of nautical perfection in my eyes ; for she is *homeward bound.* Such a world of pleasurable sensations is comprised in that simple word, that it renders me indifferent, for the moment, to all the inconveniences and annoyances by which I am surrounded ; not the least of which, I must own, are the eternal grumblings of my fellow passengers. To speak the truth, my roving inclinations have

been amazingly sobered down by the experience of the last eighteen months; and my inveterate love of adventure has been so completely extinguished in me by the comfortless bivouacs and rheumatic *souvenirs* of a mountain life, that I have firmly made up my mind to confine my future roamings within the range of those pleasant incidents of civilized routes—a sea-coal fire and feather bed.

On whatever part of the vessel I cast my eye, I find it crowded with representatives from almost every nation of the globe, the natives of Chili and Peru forming what an Irish elector would call "the dirty majority." Although they are, most of them, returning with money, they are as filthy and poverty-stricken a looking an assemblage as could well be found out of the precincts of St. Giles's. Most of the Americans on board are suffering from the effects of intermittent fever, ague, and rheumatism, diseases contracted in the insane pursuit of an object, which some of them are never destined to enjoy. The evidences of broken constitutions, crippled limbs, and the

numerous attendant "ills that flesh is heir to," are too manifest to be mistaken in the shrunken and wasted forms that lie groaning and shivering in every variety of recumbent position upon the decks. One of these poor sufferers has evidently been a tall and powerfully built man, with a fine, intellectual cast of features. He tells me that he is a physician by profession; and, having been attracted by the hope of realizing an independence in a less slow and painful manner than by his profession, he had abandoned it, and crossed the mountains to try his chances at the mines. Soon after his arrival there, he was attacked by both fever and ague, and became so enfeebled by their ravages, that he preferred returning home, unsuccessful, to running the chance of ending his days by a slow and lingering death in that wild region. The poor doctor's berth consists of a couple of trunks in the steerage part of the vessel, on which he has hardly room to stretch his aching limbs, owing to the number of invalids that are crowded together. Beside him lies

another and younger man, doubled up with some chronic complaint, who had left a thriving business in the Bowery, New York, to take this short cut to fortune. A few weeks at "the diggins" had, however, completely disheartened him; and he is now on his return home, completely cured of his taste for mining, and thoroughly impressed with the conviction that the only sure road to the acquisition of wealth is by the old beaten tracks of industry and perseverance.

* * * *

I had not been on board long, when, as I was arranging my baggage in the order in which it was to remain during the voyage, I heard a well-known voice sing out my name; and, on looking towards the place from whence the sounds proceeded, beheld the plump, ruddy face of O'Reilly, grinning and nodding at me from one of the upper bunks.

"It's myself that's glad to see you," said the worthy fellow, after a hearty grip of the hand. "I was afraid that you had kicked the bucket, like many of our old chums, never

having heard a word of you after we parted company. Ah, then, do you remember the scrimmage we had with the Yakees in the d——d caitherasses in the lower country? Didn't I pick down that skulking Indian in beautiful style?"

"Oh, I have not forgotten the affair, I promise you; for my body was mapped with red lines, by the thorns, for a fortnight afterwards. Bless me, how fat you have grown since I saw you last! Why, you must have stumbled upon some vein of milk and honey in this land of starvation!"

"The devil a bit of it! I've been livin' on tobacco-smoke and point ever since I've been at the mines. There's nothing that swells a man out like that sort of prog; but the worst of it is, if you happen to meet with any hard rubs while you're feedin' on it, you've a chance of collapsing in a minute."

"By the by," said I, smiling at the conceit, "what sort of luck have you had at the mines?"

"Oh, I did purty fair, considherin'. I win-

thered up there, the last season; an' a divilish hard time we had of it. What with the substantial fare I've just been tellin' you of, an' the rain, an' the could, an' the snow, we could only work now and then; but, on the whole, I suppose I musn't complain. I dug about six thousand dollars'-worth, altogether; but three thousand of that went for expenses; an' after stickin' at it as long as I thought I could stand it, I determined to make a start, an' go home with the rest to the ould woman."

"You don't mean to say that you are married?"

"Me married! No, by Jabers! though it's my own fault. A rich *ranchero's* daught——"

"Hold hard, O'Reilly! I've heard that story before," hastily interrupted I, apprehensive that he was about to inflict on me one of those unconscionable yarns in which he was in the habit of indulging, and which generally went to show the high degree of estimation in which he was held by the *señoritas*, and the overpowering anxiety of the wealthy *rancheros* to convert him into a son-in-law.

"Have you heard or seen anything of the sergeant of company D? How did he get along at the mines?"

"Oh, he has done capitally. You know he carried up a quantity of provisions, and, as soon as he got a little to rights, fell to tradin' with the wild Ingins; and, being a knowin' Yankee, gammoned them out of an immense sight o' gold. Although we worked like niggers, we couldn't come near him at all: so that it's my private opinion thradin' is a divilish dale more profitable than diggin'. The sergeant is now captain and part owner of a brig running up the Sacramento."

"Then he's fairly on the road to fortune. Did you see or hear anything of Drew, while you were in the diggins?"

"Oh, yes: he cut a great swell in Stocton and in San Francisco, before your arrival there. He has made and lost thousands of dollars by gamblin'; although he found it hard enough to raise the tin in Monterey. I heard of his sellin' his best pair of pants there, to raise a few dollars for the gaming-

table. I don't know what's become of him; but he's sure to go to the divil, unless, after makin' a good haul, he has sense enough to clear out, and have done with it. That's the only way for them sort of customers. You remember Harry Wilson? He has started a ferry on one of the rivers, and is makin' money hand over fist. Wettermark is knockin' about somewhere in the neighbourhood of San Francisco, boat-building, and doing carpenters' work. He is the same quare old 'coon as ever, and is always grumblin', and complainin', and turning his hand to every fiddle faddle that strikes his fancy. As for any chance *he* has of makin' a fortune out here, he might as well have remained in his own counthry. He has too many crotchets in his head, and too many strings to his fiddle, to get along among the rough-and-readies of this wild place. If his mother has got any more like him, it's my sarious advice to her to keep them at home."

"And the German Doctor? What's become of him?"

"He got into a little bit of scrape in the Stanislaus, an' was as near as an ace gettin' scragged for it. Did you never hear of that affair? Well, I'll tell you all about it. He had occasion to go down, one day, to a thradin' store, to buy some physic, when who does he meet but Liftinent M——, of the volunteers, who stopped him, and tould him that he must get down off the horse he was ridin', as it was his property. Freünd refused, sayin' that he had obtained the horse from a Spaniard in Monterey, in exchange for one of his revolvin' pistols; and, havin' come by it fairly, he saw no raison why he should give it up. If M—— insisted on it, however, he was ready to go before the Alcalde.

"'You d——'d Dutchman!' roared the Liftinant, (you know how passionate he was) 'if you don't instantly give up my horse, I'll see if I can't make you do it, without appealin' to any humbug of an Alcalde.'

"The Doctor wheeled round, and was ridin' away, when the Liftinant galloped after him, flourishin' a long bowie-knife in his hand, and

threatened to kill him. Freünd couldn't stand this; so he tould the Liftinant that if he didn't keep off, and lave him quiet, he'd be obliged to cook his hash for him. The fool of a Liftinant kept advancin' upon him, notwithstandin' the fair warning he had had; an' the Docthor, seein' that his own life was in danger, took aim at him with his rifle, and shot him dead. The poor fellow was sorely throubled about it, whin he saw his corpse lyin' stark stiff before him; an', blubberin' like a child, he goes straight to the Alcalde, and gives himself up to stand his thrial. There was a great hubbub about the affair; an' there was such a strong feelin' against the Docthor, that many thought it would go hard with him. I was at one time very much afeard that he stood but a poor chance. Whin the thrial came on, however, an' it was shown that he had only acted in self-defence, he was acquitted of the charge of murder, an' got off with a sentence of one year's banishment from the mining districts."

"I am sincerely rejoiced at it; for, from

what I know of him, I believe him to be incapable of committing any act of violence, without great provocation. He is a perfect tiger, however, when wantonly insulted or injured; and the details you give me of this affair show that he exerted a degree of forbearance that I could hardly have expected from a man of his violent passions. Did you see anything of Judson, since we parted?"

"Yes; he was knockin' about in the mines for awhile, sometimes diggin', an' sometimes dhrivin' a thrade in physic; for we had lots of sickness. At last, he fell ill himself; and, like the rest of those humbugs of docthors, couldn't manage to cure himself. Freünd behaved very good-naturedly to him, when he saw he was goin', an', forgettin' the ould spiteful feelin' that was between them, attended him night and day, until he gave up the ghost. Well, I can't say that any of us was very much cut up at losin' him; for he was a bitter enemy, and a quare enough friend. Afther he was buried, one of our counthrymen, who had an old grudge against him,

stuck over his grave an epitaph that gave us many a hearty laugh—Heaven forgive us for the same!"

"Let me hear it."

"Oh! I'm not shure that I can remember it; but, as well as I can recollect, it ran thus:—

> 'Planted like rotting seed beneath this bank,
> Never to vegetate, lies Doctor Hank.
> For where would death and desolation stop,
> If Judson jalap grew into a crop?
> The sexton's patron, the grave-digger's pride—
> The coffin-market fell when Judson died.'

"Why, it is nothing more than a paraphrase of the well-known epitaph on a late eccentric Irish physician.

"You don't say so! And the blackguard wanted to persuade us that he had composed every word of it himself!"

* * * *

We were now running down the Pacific, with the wind in our favour, and making at the rate of from eight to eleven knots an hour. Notwithstanding the debilitated state of my

health at starting, I had not been more than two days at sea when I began to feel the invigorating effect of the sea breezes. I completely recovered the tone of my spirits, and felt as if I had shaken off the heavy feeling of despondency and mental apathy that had preyed upon me in San Francisco. This was singular enough, seeing the effect produced by the change on most of my fellow passengers. Those who had hitherto resisted the influence of the climate, and of constant exposure and hardship, now began to experience chronic symptoms, to which they had not before been subject; whilst the confirmed invalids did not derive that benefit from the sea air, which, under other circumstances, might have been expected. Notwithstanding his apparently robust health, O'Reilly was one of the first affected; and, under the combined inroads of ague and fever, his plump figure soon realized his own absurd simile of a collapse. I never saw so great a change effected in any one in so short a time. His gaiety of spirits seemed to have

deserted him in a moment; and, from being one of the liveliest, he became one of the dullest dogs in existence.

I have already incidentally alluded to the disgraceful state of the vessel. Before we had been many days at sea, we found our worst anticipations confirmed; and a disturbance, approaching to a riot, was the consequence. Nothing could have been worse than the arrangements made for our accommodation, the provisions being not only insufficient, but of the most inferior description, and the number of passengers sent on board by the agent greater than the vessel could, with any degree of comfort, afford room for. An additional subject of complaint was the fact that the Chilians, who had first come on board, had appropriated to themselves a number of bunks to which they were not entitled. There were seven or eight volunteers on board, and they resolved to put an end to this state of things. Going to the Captain in a body, they represented to him that they had been crowded out of their berths by the foreigners, and that they conceived they had a right to be treated with at least equal consideration. The Captain, at first, paid no attention to their remonstrances; but, finding them determined, he promised to have a more

distinct list of the passengers and their berths made out; and authorized each individual to take possession of that properly belonging to him. This occurred about two bells in the first night-watch; and, armed with the written promise which they had extorted from the Captain, the volunteers proceeded to rout the foreigners out of the disputed berths. Nor can they be blamed for this proceeding, when the circumstances under which it was resorted to are taken into consideration.

The greater part of the Americans, many of them invalids, had been obliged to take the alternative of sleeping upon their trunks, or of lying down on a filthy deck, crowded in almost every part, while the foreigners occupied their berths. The fare in this quarter of the vessel was eighty dollars; and yet the food and treatment the passengers received were fit only for pigs. Nor was the food of the cabin-passengers much better, although they paid the high price of two hundred and fifty dollars; the only advantages they possessed over the others consisting in a slight,—a very slight, difference in the attention paid to the cleanliness of their berths, and the privilege, if it could be called so, of a regular table. It was painful to witness the scrambles that daily took place at the cook-

ing-galley for food; and the acts of violence to which they gave rise were a constant source of excitement and angry feeling. To add to our embarrassments, the engineers and firemen suffered so dreadfully from the heat the whole way down, that the vessel frequently came nearly to a stand-still, from sheer exhaustion on their part. I have seen the poor fellows emerge from the hold, to get a breath of fresh air, with clothes so saturated with perspiration, that they seemed to have been dragged through the sea. This arose, in some measure, from the paucity of hands to work the fires; and none of the passengers could be prevailed on to assist them at any price. The only remedy was to keep plying them continually with brandy—an expedient often resorted to on board these coast steamers, which are about the worst appointed vessels that it has ever been my ill fortune to sail in.

Whilst on the subject of these steamers, I may as well mention some curious particulars that I learned from one of the passengers respecting the first trip of the California steamer to Panama. She sailed on the 1st of May, as advertised, with Governor Mason and several other persons of note on board. During the passage, a Portuguese sailor, whilst relieving the man at the wheel, had some altercation with

him as to whether it was the proper time for the relief. One of the passengers who was standing by heard the foreman say, "Half-past one;" and, being something of an alarmist, immediately concluded that the sailors intended to murder the passengers at that hour next morning. The matter was talked over in the cabin amongst a party of wise heads and a few timid women; and the result of the conference was, that they arrived at the conclusion that the sailors were actually going to seize the ship at the appointed time. Every movement of the sailors was now minutely watched by the passengers; so that, if Jack had occasion to go for a rope-yarn, a marlinespike, or a bucket, he was supposed to be making preparations for a wholesale massacre. At this time, the vessel happened to be within 250 miles of Panama; and, her supply of coal having been all consumed, she was going only at the rate of two knots an hour, under canvass. At nine o'clock, P.M., all the muskets, pistols, and cutlasses, on board, were served out to the passengers, who were divided into parties, and supplied with a bottle of brandy to each watch. Colonel Mason took the command. He kept a double-barrel gun and a cavalry sword concealed in the folds of his cloak, ready for any sudden emergency, and remained seated on the quarter-deck the whole of the night. There

were twenty-five men in each watch; and, as they marched in military array round the deck, the vessel seemed to have fulfilled the original design of its builders, and assumed, in all respects, the air of a war-steamer. It was quite amusing to see the passengers load their pieces; some of them putting in four or five balls, and others a double handful of buck-shot, at a charge; whilst several were busy cutting up lead for slugs. These terrible preparations were made for the heroic purpose of killing five poor sailors, who, with the exception of the officers and firemen, composed the entire of the crew. During all this time, the honest tars remained utterly unconscious of the meaning of these strange evolutions. When their watch was called, the first that made his appearance from below was struck with astonishment at seeing the passengers under arms, and immediately retired, crying out to his comrades, "As I live, boys, the steerage-passengers are going to take the ship!" Upon this the sailors held a council, and came to the conclusion that the passengers "might fight the matter out between them, and that they would have nothing to do with it." Accordingly, they fastened up the forecastle, and, turning into their bunks, slept soundly until morning.

This conduct on their parts still further con-

firmed the passengers in their opinion; and not one of the latter had an hour's sleep till daylight. The two mates, in the mean time, were obliged to steer the ship. Next morning, the sailors were not a little surprised on learning the sensation they had created; for they naturally regarded it as the height of absurdity to have supposed it possible for five men to overcome sixty passengers, besides the officers. The Captain now determined to get the ship into port, at all hazards, and accordingly gave orders to the men to cut up all the light spars, hencoops, berths, ladders, and hatches, which were successively thrown into the fires. During one night in particular, the passengers were kept awake by the tearing up of the orlop-deck. The bulkheads were next torn down, there being yet 190 miles to run. The ship looked a perfect wreck, the Captain burning up everything to get her in; and indeed, if it had not been for his zeal and promptitude, she would never have reached her destination. He arrived within ten miles of Panama by consuming oakum, tar, pitch and rosin; and the vessel cast anchor within a stone's throw of an island—one of a small group rising precipitously from the sea. Three or four men then borrowed the life-boat from the ship, resolved to row their way to the town. It rained in torrents while they were out, and the thunder and lightning were

terrific. They started about nine o'clock in the morning; and, after pulling at the oars till five in the afternoon, considered themselves fortunate in effecting their safe return, although they had failed in their object. They were utterly exhausted by their exertions; and the hands of the men were so stiff and blistered with pulling, that they could not use them for several days afterwards. Fortunately, on one of this group of miniature islands a supply of coal was discovered, and by its aid the steamer soon reached Panama.

CHAPTER XXX.

"A good wife is a crown to her husband"—A beggar on horseback—"All is not gold that glitters"—Cares and anxieties of wealth—Another outbreak on board—San Diego—San Pedro—A mining-party in a fix—A death on board—San Blas—A happy riddance—Acapulco—The harbour and its incidents.

Returning to my narrative, after this brief digression, I need hardly tell my readers that the passengers of the vessel in which I was embarked presented some amusing varieties and shades of character. Amongst them were to be found some rough illustrations of "the beggar on horseback"—men who, having obtained the sudden possession of wealth, were now determined, as Sam Slick says, "to go the full figure, and do the thing genteel," by taking the most expensive berths, and strutting about in all the consciousness of their new-born importance. But the more sensible, and, to their credit be it said, the majority of the miners preferred economizing their hard-earned gains, and remaining in the second or steerage-cabin; for there were but two classes of berths on board this vessel. As, in the congregation of doubtful and reckless

characters thus brought together, it was unsafe for the passengers to keep their money in their trunks, or even about their persons, it was usually placed in care of the Captain, who received it on condition of being paid a certain per-centage on the amount for his trouble.

There were but two ladies on board, both of whom were married, and had several children to take care of on the voyage. Their husbands had acquired some little money, but had not secured anything like a competency, by the hazardous experiment they had made in emigrating with their wives and families to this remote region. No better proof could be afforded, than their haste to return to their native land, that the future prospects of the country were not such as to induce any one to remain a moment longer than was necessary for the partial attainment of his object. One of these ladies, the daughter of a clergyman, and a woman of considerable intelligence and most amiable manners, had taken her place with her family in the steerage, and exposed herself without a murmur to all the inconveniences and disagreeable associations that I have been describing as incident to that part of the vessel. Her history may serve as a lesson to those fine ladies who affect to think that education unfits them for the homely duties and exertions of ad-

versity, and who, instead of aiding and cheering the efforts of their husbands by their own patient endurance and industry, sit down repining over the position they have either voluntarily abandoned or lost, and become a burden and a discouragement to the men they profess to love. Mrs. E——had married a poor but industrious and well-principled man, who, finding that he could not support his family as he wished in the States, determined on emigrating with them to the land of which such wonderful accounts of fortunes suddenly and easily realized, and of a future pregnant with the hopes of boundless prosperity, had reached him in his humble abode. On landing in California, he had found, like many others, that he had been the dupe of exaggeration, and that it would require the most laborious exertions, and the most painful sacrifices on the part of himself and family, to maintain themselves in their new position. Being a sensible man, however, and blessed with a partner whose advice and aid were invaluable under the circumstances, he set to work, and after struggling hard in various branches of trade, had succeeded in realizing a few thousand dollars. No small portion of this had been, however, earned by the wife, by washing linen at nine or ten dollars the dozen pieces—the ordinary rate of payment for this necessary element of comfort. On the

whole, however, they were returning poor; the struggles and privations of their new life had proved too severe for them; and, although they had to look to a long futurity, and to the establishment and well-being of their children, they were abandoning without regret a country where apparently these objects could most easily be attained. They had possession of a small cabin partitioned off the steerage part of the vessel, which did not, however, prevent them from being unwilling listeners to the rude and but too often obscene conversation of the rough beings that occupied the latter. Amongst the spectacles of filth and uncleanliness by which one was surrounded, it was quite refreshing to behold the neatness and tidiness that distinguished every member of this little family; the ever watchful tenderness of the mother seeming to delight in the contrast.

Although only what was strictly termed steerage-passengers, Mrs. E—— and her family were in the habit of coming upon deck every afternoon, and seating themselves under the awning stretched over the after-cabin. In no case should this privilege be refused to any well conducted woman at sea; and on the Pacific coast, at the period of which I am speaking, the passengers were usually glad of any accession to the number of females. To most of us, therefore, the so-

ciety of so cheerful and agreeable a person as Mrs. E—— was at all times an acquisition. If the scene I am about to relate had not been too contemptible and amusing to merit indignation, the author of it would have been severely castigated.

One of the cabin-passengers, a vulgar-looking mechanic, who, by some fortunate chance, had become suddenly enriched, took it into his head to show his importance by turning up his nose at the E—— family, and expressing his dissatisfaction at what he termed the barefaced intrusion of women and children from the steerage. No one seemed to pay any attention to his murmurs, except to smile at their folly and absurdity; and the little impression they seemed to make on his hearers only served to swell up the measure of his wrath. One evening, when Mr. E——'s youngest daughter, an interesting child of about ten years of age, was in the act of seating herself, as usual, under the awning, our would-be aristocrat suddenly startled her, by addressing her in the following terms:—

"Don't you know, child, that this is no place for you? These seats are intended for the cabin-passengers, and you have no right to be here."

"I didn't know, sir," replied the little girl, frightened at the sternness of the fellow's man-

ner. "Mamma told me to come up here, as it is so crowded and warm below."

"Then go below again, and tell your mother to wash your face. Steerage-passengers have no business here."

The poor child left the deck, with the tears in her eyes. I have already said, that nothing could be neater or more cleanly than the habits of this family; and I believe that the little thing felt more hurt at the imputation of a dirty face, than at her banishment from the quarter-deck.

A few of us, who happened to overhear this conversation, now approached the purse-proud upstart, and gave him a sound rating for the wanton brutality with which he had addressed the child. His ignorance was, however, too crass, to let him feel the force of our remarks; and, with a feeling more akin to pity than to indignation, we left him to the enjoyment of the consciousness of having manfully asserted the privileges of wealth.

Although it is undeniable that the possession of money produces, amongst the Yankees, as amongst all other nations, that degree of deference which in America may be said to confer the only claims to aristocracy—to their honour be it said, in no country is greater respect paid to woman. Such an incident as that I have just

described is of such rare occurrence, and so totally foreign to the habits of even the lowliest-bred American, that it created a strong sensation amongst our little community, and rendered the remainder of the voyage anything but agreeable to the author of it. As generally happens, in such cases, it led to some amusing discussions as to the relative respectability of the inmates of the fore and after-cabins, and the satisfactory conclusion was arrived at, by the former, "that they could buy and sell the latter twenty times over." And I believe it; for in the steerage were numbers of hardy miners, whose wealth, acquired by incredible labour, they were determined to economize and hold in a vice-like grip, until they reached the land, where it would prove most serviceable to them. The circumstance, therefore, of a man travelling in the steerage, afforded no criterion as to his means, or even respectability.

An amusing illustration of the force of conventional habits, in connexion with this fact, happened to fall within the sphere of my own observation. I was in the billiard-room of the Parker House, in San Francisco, one night, when a fashionably-dressed young man entered, and stretched himself to sleep on one of the sofas, contrary to the rules of the place; it being customary, when any one is caught napping,

even in a chair, to wake him up, and intimate that the apartment is not intended for a bedroom. He was a privileged person, it seemed, for the bar-keeper left him undisturbed in the enjoyment of his couch. Hearing this person, in the course of a conversation on indifferent subjects, express his regret that he had not been brought up to some mechanical or business pursuit, and learning from the bar-keeper that he had formerly known him in excellent circumstances in New York, I came to the conclusion that he was some fashionable idler, who, misled by the newspaper accounts, had come out to California in the hope of repairing his shattered fortunes. A few days afterwards, this same party entered a store in which I happened to be conversing with the proprietor, and offered to sell a great-coat, worth forty dollars, for fifteen. The shop-keeper higgled about the price, and finally purchased it for eight. The gentleman who had been reduced to such straits to get home was now one of our first cabin-passengers.

One of the passengers in the steerage kept us continually amused by the extraordinary and painful degree of watchfulness which he displayed with respect to the safe custody of a small box about a foot square, in which he had deposited his gold, being too avaricious to allow the Captain his per-centage for keeping it.

He was an American volunteer, tall, raw-boned, and shrewd-featured, who had made his money by running a small craft from San Francisco to Sacramento city. He had had considerable success; and, being a prudent, close-fisted fellow, had amassed a large sum in a comparatively short period. The box contained his whole fortune; and he seemed resolved to hold on to it, "like grim Death to a dead nigger." He remained nearly the whole of the voyage on his bunk, with the box between his legs—the object of his dreams by night, and of his fond contemplation by day. He had purposely secured the darkest bunk in the vessel, in the hope of escaping observation; but it would not do. His old comrades, who were ever ripe for mischief, would now and then go to the obscure corner in which he had ensconced himself, and, apparently unconscious that he was there, seize hold of it, as if to carry it off. If he happened to be dozing, he would start up in an agony of terror, amidst roars of laughter from his tormentors; so that, between the exaggerations of his own fancy, and the tricks played upon him by his quondam comrades, the poor fellow was kept in a state of continual alarm, and got little or no rest.

I have already alluded to the badness and insufficiency of the food provided for us. The few cows taken on board having been killed and

eaten in a very short period after our departure from San Francisco, we were reduced to live entirely on musty pork—"salt horse," as it is called—and coarse sea-biscuit; whilst the tea—if tea it can be termed—was little better than a decoction from a very inferior leaf found in great abundance along the coast, and used on board many of the vessels, from motives of economy. The consequence was a general break out on the part of the passengers: large pans of the condemned provisions were flung overboard, and an intimation, approaching somewhat to a command, given to the Captain to provide something better for us. He ordered some rice and treacle to be served out; and, this operating as a "sweetener," tranquillity was soon restored.

We put into the port of San Diego, on our way down. This harbour is the most southern in the territory of the United States, lying in latitude 32° 40′ N., and longitude 114° 11′ W. It forms an arm of the sea ten miles in length and four in width, and, being landlocked, is secure from the influence of the winds. The town of San Diego, consisting of a number of small *adobè* houses, is situated at the north side of the bay, on a sand-flat two miles wide; whilst the mission is about six miles distant, up a valley to the north-east. The surrounding country is composed of volcanic sand, mixed with scoriæ;

and the soil is evidently but ill adapted for cultivation.

We also touched at San Pedro, where we saw some tents belonging to persons on their way to the mines. We were informed that they were in a state of the greatest distress and embarrassment, having neither provisions to subsist upon where they were, nor money to enable them to pursue their voyage up the coast. Some of them had come thus far from the most distant part of Lower California, whilst others had been put on shore from some of the ships. Fortunately, there happened to be a small military station here; and the American officers had humanely done every thing in their power to alleviate their distress.

Whilst lying here, we received a visit from a number of dark-eyed *señoritas*, who surveyed the steamer with great admiration, and, being received with politeness, remained on board as long as they reasonably could. A few of them were graceful and pleasing in their appearance and manners, but the majority were very far removed from the standard of beauty. Such as they were, however, they infused a little gaiety and cheerfulness amongst us; and the sunshine of their smiles had such an effect on the rough beings that composed the majority of our passengers, that I feel certain, if time had permitted of it, many would have laid their persons and fortunes at their feet.

A few days before we reached San Blas, where the majority of the Spaniards were expected to go ashore, one of the invalids, whose constitution had been broken down by constant hardship and exposure in the mines, after great suffering, breathed his last. I happened to be standing at the foot of the ladder in the steerage, when I heard loud groans issuing from a dark bunk to my right; and, going over to inquire what was the matter, found an elderly Spaniard writhing in agony, and his son leaning over him, apparently in great embarrassment as to the course he should pursue. The attack, as far as I could judge from what he told me, was a sort of spasmodic cholera. I went immediately in search of the doctor; but before I could succeed in finding him, the man was dead.

As we proceeded down the coast, the land everywhere assumed a greener and fresher appearance, the result no doubt of the heavy dews that fall at this period of the year. We soon arrived at San Blas, a picturesque but apparently miniature town, partly screened from our view by lofty trees and foliage of the most luxuriant description. It lies about 21° N. latitude, and is surrounded by low marshes, which render the climate very unhealthy. During the rains, it is completely abandoned by the inhabitants. The roadstead is good; but we had to wait a conside-

rable time before any boats put off from the shore —an evidence, notwithstanding what I have seen stated to the contrary, that the place can boast of but very little trade. At last, a couple of long canoes were seen paddling towards us; and there was great bustle and excitement amongst the Mexicans to get ashore. Never did a rich man get rid of his poor relations with more pleasure than was evidenced by the Americans at this happy riddance. It was not to be wondered at; for the presence of such an immense number of dirty and wretched looking beings had rendered the voyage disagreeable beyond the usual calculations of discomfort and inconvenience. The senses were all outraged in turn by the habits of these people; and the relief may be more easily imagined than described which their departure afforded us. The corpse of the dead man was also put ashore here, for the purpose of being decently interred. Having taken care to secure his father's effects, and pleaded his inability to defray the expenses of the funeral, the son declined accompanying his remains to their last resting-place, and continued the voyage with us until we reached Acapulco, which lies about four degrees lower down than San Blas.

Acapulco is the prettiest town I have seen on the coast. It contains many low-sized but substantial houses, constructed of wood, and

roofed over with the leaves of the palm and other trees. Many of these dwellings are charmingly situated on the hills surrounding the town. Upon an elevation to our right stood the fort, of whose strength and superior construction I had heard so much during the war; but I confess that I was somewhat disappointed by its appearance. It certainly was the strongest Mexican fortification I had ever seen; but it struck me that two or three good broadsides from one of the Yankee frigates "would knock it all of a heap." The town is everywhere adorned with fine trees and a variety of tropical plants, the rich green leaves and foliage of which render the contrast striking with all the towns we had seen further north. The harbour is one of the finest I have seen. Captain Basil Hall, who visited it in 1822, describes it as "easy of access; very capacious; the water not too deep; the holding-ground good; quite free from hidden dangers; and as secure as the basin in Portsmouth dock-yard. From the interior of the harbour, the sea cannot be discovered; and a stranger coming to the spot by land would imagine he was looking over a sequestered lake."

Acapulco formerly enjoyed a monopoly of the trade between Manilla, one of the Spanish possessions, and Mexico. It was the principal harbour on the western coast frequented by the

richly-freighted Spanish galleons; and extensive fairs were held in the town for the sale of every description of goods suitable for the markets of the Indian Ocean. The distance from Acapulco to Mexico is about 104 leagues.

The substantial ruins of brick and stone, which everywhere meet the eye, and which stretch far beyond the boundaries of the site of the town, prove that the place must have been formerly one of great importance. The number of vessels that are likely to touch here on their way to and from San Francisco will, I have no doubt, soon restore it to something like its original greatness.

The church stands in the Plaza, which occupies the centre of the town. The interior is as plain as it can possibly be; but on *fête* days, it is customary to ornament it with palm-branches and flowers. Observing a miniature ship suspended from the ceiling, I inquired the object of it, and was informed that it had been placed there in compliment to the sailors, of whom great numbers frequent the town, the port being one of the chief recruiting places for whalers. The inhabitants, it seems, have an eye to their interests, even in their devotions; and certainly I know of nothing in the way of ecclesiastical adornment more likely to tickle the fancy of Jack.

The weather being exceedingly hot, and fruit being known to abound here, a good deal of sickness was apprehended from the indiscretion of the passengers. In San Francisco, fruit had been so scarce during the whole of the time that I remained there, that an apple readily fetched fifty cents, whilst peaches frequently brought from two to three dollars a piece. There was some reason, therefore, to fear the effects of over-indulgence in the delicious tropical fruits which were here so cheap and plentiful. I own that, personally, I had great difficulty in restraining my appetite, so refreshing did I find them after the heated atmosphere of a crowded vessel.

I was told that when the first steamer touched here, on its way to San Francisco, it created a prodigious sensation, and brought down the population in immense numbers to the shore. Nothing could persuade some of the most superstitious of the natives but that his Satanic Majesty had arrived in *propria persona*.

Cock-fighting seems to be one of the chief amusements of the inhabitants; and at the door of almost every house may be seen one of those pugnacious birds, tied to a stick sunk in the ground, and sending forth now and then a shrill challenge to his opposite neighbours.

I remained but a short time on shore, and on

returning to the vessel, found it surrounded by numbers of canoes, containing supplies of fruit, poultry, and several pretty girls, who came to dispose of these welcome commodities to the passengers. In one direction, a crowd of the latter had gathered round a lusty Mexican, who held extended at arm's length above his head a large bunch of bananas, which they were all struggling to obtain. In another, one of the sable beauties of the town was descanting, with great volubility, on the merits and value of an enormous turkey, to which, owing to the eagerness evinced to purchase it, she attached a most extravagant price. But the majority of the passengers were leaning over the bulwarks, screaming, at the pitch of their voices, in execrable Spanish to the people in the boats to hand them up the various articles that they coveted. Amongst them were five or six young men struggling to obtain a basket of new-laid eggs, which are considered a great luxury by persons from Upper California. I was rather amused at the manner in which they tried to make their arch-looking little Mexican owner comprehend them.

"*Señores, necesitan ustedes algo?*"

"*Señorita, deme usted huevos, Quanto vale la docena?*"

"*Huevos! huevos para mi.*"

"D—n it, man, those are mine!"

"What a bore that I can't make her understand me! I say, Jem, what's eggs in Spanish?"

"*Huevos.*"

"Oh, yes, to be sure. What a bad memory I've got! *Huevos! huevos! muchacha.*"

"*Quantos quiere usted, señor?*"

"The devil! What's four shillings in their lingo?"

"*Un peso.*"

"*Huevos, muchacha, huevos por un peso.*"

The eggs were here passed up, and there was a regular scuffle for them, the person who had first asked for them being, as usual, the last served. After a scene of indescribable confusion, in which the parties engaged seemed frequently on the point of coming to blows, the wants of all were at length supplied, and something like tranquillity restored.

Previous to our arrival, an apprehension had prevailed amongst us that we should find the cholera raging here; but, on being assured that there were no traces of it, we abandoned ourselves to the full enjoyment of the delicious fruits and vegetables with which the place abounded. Over indulgence, however, generally brings with it a penalty, and several of the passengers suffered severely from it in this instance. One of them with whom I was on terms of intimacy, from his companionable qualities, returned on

board late in the evening, after a long day spent on shore, and, as usual, I began to jest with him on the nature of the attractions that had detained him so late. Although one of the best-tempered fellows imaginable, he suddenly rose from his seat in a paroxysm of rage, and approaching me with a menacing gesture, observed that I had insulted him, and that, ill as he was, I should fight him on the spot. I replied that I was not aware that he was suffering from illness, and, although I fully appreciated the liberality of his offer, I must decline it until there was some glory to be gained by a victory over him. He turned away with a scornful observation; but had not proceeded more than four or five paces towards the cabin, when I had reason to rejoice at my forbearance, for he suddenly dropped down in a fit, and remained working in violent convulsions for several minutes. I ran instantly for the doctor; but notwithstanding the strong remedies that he prescribed, he passed the night in the most intense agony. He got better, however, towards morning, but did not recover his strength for several weeks afterwards. His illness was caused by eating too much fruit, and exposing himself carelessly to the rays of the sun.

Getting all our passengers on board with some difficulty, we proceeded on our voyage.

The weather had been gradually growing so warm, that few of us could now sleep below. Every night the upper deck presented an extraordinary spectacle, there being hardly an inch of space left unoccupied by the passengers, who lay stretched on their dirty blankets in every variety of recumbent posture. On one occasion, happening to observe a vacant place upon a coil of ropes where I fancied I could repose with comparative comfort, I ran down for my *serapa*, to throw around me. On my return, to my great mortification, I found the place occupied; and I was compelled to pass several hours of the night on my feet, from the difficulty of finding another spot to lie down upon. The rest of the voyage to Panama was tedious and uncomfortable in the extreme, and it was with no small degree of satisfaction that we one night found ourselves safely anchored in the bay of that town.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Arrival at Panama — Agreeable surprise — The American Hotel—Scene in a cockpit—Decayed appearance of the public buildings—Robbery of gold-dust—Crossing the Isthmus—Cortes's road—A lady cavalier—The carriers of Panama—Crucis—Exorbitant charges—Arrival at Gorgona—A Kanaka heroine—Chagres—Departure for New York.

Our arrival at Panama was first indicated to us by the glimmering of a solitary light proceeding from one of the houses; but, although we were literally gasping with anxiety to get ashore, we were compelled to wait until the morning: and wait we did, wakefully, for not one of us slept a wink the whole night. Morning broke at last, and found us anchored at three or four miles from shore, within a mile of a lofty, abrupt hill to our left, composed principally of rock, but the summit clothed with verdure.

The Bay is extensive, and surrounded with green and undulating hills, although the appearance of the landscape indicates a warm, damp, and unhealthy atmosphere. To our right, in the distance, stood the decaying walls of a fort, stretching for a full mile along the shore; whilst opposite to us lay several miniature islands, that,

seen through a golden mist, presented a dreamy and pleasing feature in the vista, the beauty of which was heightened by the reflection of the rays of the morning sun falling in burnished tints upon the solid stone walls of the town.

Whilst we were contemplating this beautiful scene, with feelings which will be readily appreciated by those who have been long confined to a vessel, and especially by those who have passed a considerable period remote from the haunts of civilized men, we observed several canoes approaching us from the shore, many of them being of enormous size, varying in length from thirty to forty feet, but in width from four to five, each hewn out of one solid piece of timber. Some of them carried sails, but the majority were paddled along by half-clad negroes, smaller in their proportions, but infinitely less repulsive in appearance than any I had ever met with in the United States. There was general rejoicing when they reached the side of our vessel, for they brought us the agreeable intelligence that the town was perfectly healthy: welcome news, indeed, as various reports had reached us, all tending to confirm the fact of the prevalence of cholera. We subsequently ascertained that the "*vomito*," a malady to which the natives are particularly subject during the rainy season, had occasioned a great mor-

tality; and to this fact we attributed the origin of the rumour respecting the cholera. But the rainy season was now over, and we therefore anticipated a pleasant journey across the Isthmus.

We experienced some difficulty in procuring a canoe, as they were at once seized upon by those who had preconcerted their arrangements for the purpose. I had joined a party who were in the same predicament as myself, and we all resolved to follow the general example, and make a rush at the first that should now draw near. I should state that the captain would not permit the ship's boats to be used for conveying the passengers ashore, and his refusal occasioned a violent altercation, the sturdy miners threatening to give him and the mate a sound thrashing.

Our party succeeded, after much scuffling, in procuring a canoe. We found the natives exceedingly "wide awake" in pecuniary matters, and had to argue lustily before we could conclude even an extravagant bargain for conveying us ashore; though, as the whole party divided the expense, it fell lightly on each individual, the passage costing twenty dollars.

It proved a wearisome one; for there was such a strong current running in a north-easterly direction, that to make direct for the town was impossible, and we were obliged to run for the inner extremity of the Bay, hugging the shore

to avoid the wind and the current. The other canoes, which now studded the waters in every direction, were obliged to tack about at short intervals, in the hope of sooner gaining the landing; but their success was indifferent, and we made as much way as they did. Our negroes tugged at the oars with unremitting perseverance until they were fairly obliged to give in from sheer exhaustion. They now hoisted the sail, and turned the head of the canoe seaward, but found it so difficult to avoid running north-east, that they speedily lowered it, and resumed their labour at the oars. Perceiving them to be utterly incapable of continuing this laborious work, so great had been their exertions, I proposed that some of our own party should turn to; a suggestion instantly acted upon. The enervating effects, however, of the atmosphere we were breathing, and of the arduous life which the majority had been leading in the mines, soon manifested themselves, for so great was the debility of the men, that not one could keep his place at the oars for more than five minutes at a time. Still we pushed on; and, after a hard struggle of several hours, found ourselves beyond the fort, at a considerable distance from the town, and where our canoe was run upon the sand with much difficulty, owing to the great number of rocks.

Scarcely had we touched bottom, than there came about us a crowd of half-clad negroes, men and boys, anxious to assist in landing and carrying our luggage. We disembarked opposite a lofty, arched gateway, from which every particle of wood had disappeared. The place had evidently been built by the early Spaniards, and I surveyed the once massive but now crumbling walls with interest. Upon a height, inside the boundary-wall of the town, stood an enormous stone sentry-box, constructed somewhat after the Moorish style; indeed, I observed in many places evidences of a taste for a mongrel species of architecture, none of the buildings having any pretensions to purity of style.

I had heard Panama spoken of as a wretched and insignificant place, but, upon entering the principal street, I was most agreeably surprised. The streets are narrow, it is true; but this peculiarity has its great advantage, inasmuch as it affords shelter from the scorching rays of the sun. The great height of the houses also contributes to this effect, and in other respects they are well adapted to obviate the disagreeableness of the climate.

This street brought us to the "Plaza," which is partially paved with large stones, and here and there covered with grass; a circumstance that elicited from my companion—one of the

volunteers—the remark, that it was time the Americans came into the country; for, once here, *they* would not let the grass grow under their feet. In one corner of the Square stood the guard-house, at the door of which we saw three or four wretched-looking soldiers, without shoes or stockings.

I put up at the "American Hotel," at which the usual charge for accommodation is fourteen dollars a week. It is a lofty, substantial house, and, at the time of my arrival, lodged ninety persons, the majority of them Americans, on their way to and from California. The table was good, but the beds were mere cots, with nothing but a couple of quilts for covering. There was one billiard-table in this establishment; and I shall not readily forget the fatigue I incurred in getting up to it, so many flights of stairs had I to ascend, and so many questions to ask.

After arranging my toilet, and taking some refreshment, I sauntered out into the town, and strolled about until I came to a billiard-room, where, without entering, I observed some twenty or thirty men of colour congregated around it, smoking cigars, betting upon the odds, or watching with much apparent interest the progress of the game. They were mostly dressed in white, and wore Panama hats; and I need not add,

that their costume was admirably calculated to "render darkness still more visible."

Hearing that next day there was some cock-fighting coming off, at the further extremity of the town, towards the road by which we were to cross, I went to witness one of these spectacles for the first time; for, though I had never had any great taste for such sights, it was worth going to see, as an amusement of the people I was now among.

The locality was a kind of circus, capable of containing perhaps five hundred persons. The seats were arranged in such an unusually steep manner, that all could witness the performances in the cockpit, without any obstruction from the persons sitting in front of them. The place was crowded with people of colour, and in the pit were several who held gamecocks in their hands, examining the birds with the air of accomplished and profound *connoisseurs*. In an arm-chair, elevated some two or three feet from the ground, was seated a very old gentleman, whose hair was snowy white, and whose complexion was whitey-brown, and who was dressed in trousers and a jacket of white linen; his whole appearance being remarkably neat; whilst he displayed, in the discharge of his functions, all the dignity and importance of a magistrate. Over and above the buzz of voices, there was a shrill and continual

crowing of cocks, which severely tried the tympanum of my ears.

After I had remained seated here some time, the spectacle commenced by two men going out of the pit, and presently returning with a couple of gamecocks, having long steel spurs bound to their heels. The old gentleman whom I have described now rang a bell, and the two men, pitting the cocks against each other, let them go. One of them was killed in fifteen seconds, the spur of his antagonist having penetrated his breast. The spur is an instrument, in shape something like a scythe, and about two inches long. I was cruel enough to feel disappointed at this expeditious despatch of matters; for I had expected to behold a protracted fight; but, having no curiosity to witness another display, I quitted the amphitheatre, to which the price of admission, I should have stated, was only five cents.

As I was returning to my hotel, I encountered a crowd of persons running after a bull up the street, the animal being secured by a rope tied around his horns, the other end of which was held by one of the natives, a part of it encircling his wrist. The poor thing seemed driven almost to desperation; and his fury was further excited by several urchins, who waved blankets before his eyes, and set dogs on him, which barked most energetically, but turned tail as soon as the bull

showed fight. The people scampered away right and left, in every direction; some into the shops, others up the lofty steps of the church; whilst others again, better acquainted with the habits of these animals, quietly moved out of the immediate circle he described with his horns, as he dashed his head about here and there, seeking to exercise them to the detriment and discomfort of any conveniently-placed individual. The man who held the rope seemed to enjoy the fun immensely, and would frequently slacken it, so as to allow the animal to run full tilt at his opponents. The excitement was soon increased by the appearance of a large English bull-dog, which, upon being urged on by his master, rushed at the animal and pinned him down. The bull plunged and struggled violently, and at last succeeded in shaking off the dog, who could not again fix him, though he continued the battle with heroic courage, biting the bull severely in several places, and getting fearfully gored in turn. At length, the bull appearing to be getting the best of it, the dog was called off, and went away panting and bleeding. I was given to understand that these scenes were of frequent occurrence in Panama.

The town possesses a cathedral and several large and handsome churches built of stone. I went into one of these, and noticed several

females of fair complexion—some remarkably good-looking—who were bedecking the altar and other parts of the interior with flowers and various ornaments, preparatory to a grand *fête* that was about to take place. Being the only white man in the church, I attracted more notice than was altogether agreeable, and therefore withdrew. On another occasion, I entered the same edifice during the celebration of divine service, the priests being at their matins. Notwithstanding their apparent devotion, however, they all raised their eyes from their books, and looked at me as though I were some strange animal just escaped from a menagerie.

These priests, when they are out of doors, wear enormous black hats—the brims being nearly three feet in diameter—and long black gowns or gaberdines. I saw one of them, next day, indulging in a practice decidedly unclerical; but ecclesiastics, in these latitudes, must not be judged by our European standard.

Besides the cathedral and the churches, there are two convents of the order of San Antonio and San Francisco, which are in comparatively good repair; but several others, which are to be found in various parts of the town, are in complete ruins.

It is melancholy to contemplate the decayed state of some of the finest buildings on the

Pacific coast, which must have cost the early Spaniards enormous sums of money and an extraordinary expenditure of labour to erect. Many of them are exceedingly picturesque, being partially covered with ivy and vines; whilst rising far above the exterior walls are to be seen countless tropical plants and flowers.

Even the private houses are not exempt from the appearance of decay. On visiting several of them, I was surprised at the great height and spaciousness of the apartments, and at the solidity of the walls. Many of them are twenty feet high, and nearly as many in width. This mode of construction evinces no economy of space, but is admirably adapted to the comfort of the inhabitants, as it renders the dwellings infinitely cooler and more agreeable, during the greater part of the year, than any place that can be found out of doors. The eaves of the houses are generally made to project as far as possible, and are supported by wooden posts. Some of them have verandas in front, the wood-work of which, as well as the building itself, is white-washed.

The majority of shops in the town are small, but they are numerous. Some of the Yankees had recently established a few hotels and eating establishments, but very few were located here in any other branch of business. The climate is,

no doubt, the cause of this, being little adapted to the constitution of the Anglo-Saxon.

Four-fifths of the population are of the negro race. They had probably come into the country in the capacity of slaves to the Spaniards, but their masters had long since lost their supremacy. A few of pure Castilian descent were still to be found; and, though these pride themselves on the fairness of their complexion, and their superior intelligence, they are utterly insignificant in point of influence.

In the hands of the people of the United States, this town could easily be rendered prosperous. The majority of the edifices are susceptible of cheap and effectual improvement, and it would require but a comparatively small outlay of money to put the whole town in complete repair, many of the most substantial buildings being entirely deserted, owing to a deficiency of wood-work, which seems to have rotted, or been torn away. When such improvements shall have been effected, and a better road cut across the Isthmus, this neglected place will assume a charming appearance. The black, woolly population will, however, remain a prominent characteristic of the town; and it perhaps will be maintained by some, that their presence will prove a great obstacle to its restoration; for it may be asserted by those who

argue against the abolition of slavery, that where they have had—as at Panama—so many privileges, they have made but little progress. I can only say that the majority of them are ignorant, filthy, and lazy, and that their dwelling here in numbers renders a residence here extremely disagreeable to the majority of foreigners.

The Americans whom I had heard speak of Panama, judging of it merely from the character of the present population and probably the state of the weather when they visited it, had informed me that it was one of the dirtiest and most disgusting places they had ever seen — the town being half sunk in mud, and, to use their own phraseology, " overrun with niggers." I had therefore expected to find it merely a collection of *adobè* and cane tenements, without a vestige of the labours of the civilized race that had once colonized it. Few places, however, have more interested me. As I surveyed the various remains of former greatness that everywhere presented themselves to my view, I was struck with admiration at the enterprising genius and indomitable perseverance of the old Spaniards, and contrasted them with the indolent habits and degenerate spirit of their descendants. When we examine those enduring monuments of their vast labours, and take into consideration the gigantic difficulties which they had to encounter

in their accomplishment, it seems difficult to comprehend how the lapse of a few centuries should have so effeminated the mental and physical energies of this iron-willed and formidable race. Whether it be attributable to the influence of climate, or the admixture of blood, or to both conjoined, it is a subject for speculation, whether the action of nearly similar causes on the hardy Anglo-Saxon population attracted to these shores, is not likely in time to produce an analogous effect.

I had some difficulty in hiring mules to Crucis, owing to the number of persons who were travelling that road. The natives had raised the price in proportion to the demand, and I found it impossible to obtain any sort of animal at less than sixteen dollars for the trip. I thought this rather extravagant, as the distance was only thirty miles, and felt very reluctant to hire a second one at the same price. Whilst reflecting on the matter, one of the volunteers informed me that I could hire one of the negroes to carry my baggage across for five dollars. I was rather surprised at this, having heard a formidable account of the difficulties of the road; but, on inquiry, found that such was the fact, and accordingly made the bargain.

I had passed three days in Panama; and, feeling desirous of continuing my journey, I had no

sooner concluded this arrangement, than I got my mule saddled, and my box and carpet-bag packed in the regular Isthmus fashion. The mule I obtained, like most of his fellows, was little better than a mere skeleton; but still it was the best I could procure, and I was fain to content myself with it. Some of my friends endeavoured to persuade me that it was better to proceed on foot; but I knew the muddy and stony nature of the road, and thought it infinitely more comfortable to ride a slow animal than subject myself to the sufferings that I must experience from these inconveniences.

The negro brought to my hotel a long frame of bamboo, with a sort of basket at the end, into which he crammed my luggage. This frame had two straps fastened to the upper part of it, through one of which he slipped his arm, whilst he passed the other over his left shoulder, and attached it under the latter to the frame which was now on his back. This contrivance not only effectually secures the load in its place, but protects the shoulders of the bearer from the continual friction they would otherwise undergo.

A large party had preceded me; but I felt no anxiety to overtake it, as there was little or no danger of my encountering violence on the route. I was armed with a good revolving pistol, in the

event of anything of the sort presenting itself; so that, all things considered, I was just as well pleased to be left to my own society.

As I rode up the principal street, I perceived a commotion at the entrance to one of the hotels, and, on stopping to inquire the cause of it, I was informed that Mr. Burke, one of the passengers by the Panama steamer, had been robbed of a considerable amount in gold-dust. The trunk that contained it had been missing for several days, but had just been found, rifled of its contents, on one of the roads in the vicinity of the town. The gentleman to whom it belonged seemed to take the matter much more coolly than the persons by whom he was surrounded. I could not help admiring his philosophy, and told him that I supposed it was in some degree owing to his having adopted the usual precaution of dividing his money, and carrying a portion of it about his person. He replied that he had fortunately done so, or he would have been left without the means of continuing his journey; and, as to the loss he had incurred, there was no use in fretting about evils that could not be remedied. Considering the distance he had come, and the perils he had encountered in search of the little store of wealth he was bringing home with him, I must say that he displayed more than ordinary equa-

nimity at the loss of the greater portion of his hard-earned treasure.

I proceeded on my route with my sable attendant, and found the commencement pleasant enough travelling, the road for some distance being paved with large and regularly cut stone. This, however, soon terminated in abundance of sand; the route still continuing dry, and comparatively easy to what I had expected to find it. Soon after we had quitted the paved road, the negro stopped, and asked my permission to take a few things to his family, who lived in a small hut to our left. Apprehensive that he was meditating an escape with my luggage, I replied that I had no objection, provided he would leave his basket in my care. He accordingly took the frame off his back, and, separating a small bundle containing provisions from my baggage, he took his departure. I took care, however, to keep him in sight, and saw him enter a wretched-looking bamboo-hut at a little distance from the route. He remained absent a considerable time; and, having paid him half his wages in advance, according to the usual custom with these people, who are exceedingly distrustful, I began to fear that he was about to desert me, and therefore called out lustily, until at last I saw him reluctantly emerge from the hut, and make his way towards me. These negroes being constantly in

the habit of deserting travellers on the route, and stealing their baggage whenever the opportunity presents itself, I was particularly careful not to lose sight of my attendant.

A few miles further on, I again found myself on a stone road, said to have been paved by Cortes to facilitate the passage of his troops from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast; and, although I have travelled rougher and steeper routes in Lower California, I cannot say that I have ever encountered such a combination of petty difficulties and annoyances. The road is, for the greater part, barely wide enough to admit of one mule passing with its packs, the sides forming steep embankments, composed chiefly of rich clay, but, in many places, of large rocks, through which a passage had evidently been cut with great labour. But little of the country can be seen on either side, owing to the height of these embankments; but now and then the traveller obtains a glimpse of dense thickets, and occasionally of undulating hills, the summits of which are covered with a deep perennial green. The recent rains having poured in torrents down the steep sides of the road, every cavity and crevice was filled with water and mud. Owing to the nature of the soil, and the constant traffic across the route from the time it was originally cut through, innumerable stones and flags had

sunk considerably below the level of their original position; whilst a few had retained their places, as if to serve as stepping-stones to the traveller over the wet and mud. It is a task of incessant and wearying exertion, however, even for those who are mounted on mules, to avoid floundering into some of these pitfalls and quagmires at every step they make.

The mules themselves are, as I have already stated, so worn-out and broken-down, that it requires the utmost vigilance and care on the part of their riders to prevent them dropping, and precipitating them into the mire. In order to guard as much as possible against this contingency, whenever ladies travel this route, they are obliged to discard the sidesaddle, and resort to a less feminine style of equitation. I overtook a party of about twenty persons on the road, amongst whom was a married lady, on her way to the States; and I watched her rather curiously, to observe how she got over the difficulties that beset her. Being fortified with that article of male attire, the figurative possession of which is said to denote domestic ascendency, she thought it incumbent upon her, I suppose, to display all the courage and nerve that should properly be encased in it. Several times, when I fancied that both she and her mule were on the point of being capsized, she recovered herself with ad-

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mirable presence of mind, and seemed to enjoy the risk exceedingly.

As to myself, I floundered on as well as I could with a mule tottering beneath me from sheer exhaustion, and sinking every minute up to his knees in mud. It seemed to me that we were making little or no progress; and I became thoroughly tired and disheartened. I do not know any temptation, however powerful, that would again induce me to encounter the never-ending series of difficulties and annoyances that laid in wait for me at every step; and I must candidly own, that even the force of female example, of which I had so merry a specimen before me, did not at all shame me into a less impatient endurance of them.

The negroes whom I met on their way to and from Panama excited my astonishment, from the amount of physical exertion which they seemed capable of undergoing. With their legs and feet bare, and nothing but a cloth around their loins, they carried enormous burdens on their backs, stepping from stone to stone with wonderful strength and dexterity. These poor creatures must lead the most wretched and laborious of all the painful modes of existence to which their race is condemned; and not even long habit, or their peculiar physical construction, can divest it of its distressing character in

the eyes of a stranger. They all bear, on their hard and wrinkled faces, the stamp of overtaxed strength; but they seemed content with their lot, and will, doubtless, regret the formation of a better route, as tending to depreciate the value of their services. Notwithstanding the toilsome and laborious nature of their occupations, however, the carriers of Panama are the hardiest and most muscular race to be seen here; for the rest of the population, both white and black, are of comparatively sickly and diminutive appearance.

Moving somewhat like a ship in a storm, rising and sinking alternately at stern and bow, surmounting first one huge stone, then a deep mud hole, then another stone, and then a small lake, my mule and myself at last reached Crucis in the evening, the whole distance traversed not being above twenty miles. Here, although half dead with fatigue, I could not get a place to sleep; and the prices demanded for every thing in the shape of refreshment was quite on the scale of Californian charges—a couple of dollars being asked for a plate of meat, and two dollars more for cooking it. The good people of this place, being on the highway to the land of gold, doubtless think it but right that those who travel on it should pay toll for the privilege.

The houses here are also built of cane, with

mud plastered over to keep out the air. They are scattered about without any attempt at arrangement, only a very small portion of the town bearing any resemblance to a street. The population does not consist of more than eight hundred persons, the climate being unhealthy, and the heat and humidity of the atmosphere such as to injuriously affect every American who happens to pass through at this season of the year. As I arrived too late to secure a bed, I passed the night without sleeping, in a small hotel. I had not been long seated in this place, when I heard some one groaning heavily in the next apartment; and, entering it to see what was the matter, found a gentleman from New York, suffering dreadfully from illness, caused, he told me, by the influence of the climate. Being unable to afford him any relief, I returned to my seat, where I remained without closing my eyes until morning, the sufferings of my neighbour in the adjoining room being sufficient to drive away all disposition to sleep.

Next morning, I joined a small party about to start, and we hired a canoe for fifty dollars, or about five dollars each, to convey us down the river. We were informed that the current ran with extraordinary swiftness towards Gorgona, and that we should, therefore, have no difficulty in rowing. The canoes are similar to

those used in the bay of Panama, with the addition of a small canvass awning, stretched on wooden hoops, cut and opened out so as to fasten to the sides of the boat. This affords but indifferent shelter during the rain, and is otherwise extremely inconvenient, being, in general, so low as to prevent one sitting under it with any degree of comfort. The men who row these boats are invariably negroes; the population of Crucis, as of most of the towns on the Isthmus, consisting almost entirely of that race. Instead of the ordinary paddles, they use rather a novel sort of oar, with a long handle, and unusually broad blade. The foliage on either bank, as we proceeded, seemed alive with parrots, macaws, and monkeys; whilst a solitary crocodile was occasionally to be seen basking in the sun. The river is rather devious in its course, and so shallow in many parts, that we were frequently in danger of running aground. The weather, however, being fine, and the motion somewhat different from that of the old broken-down mule, on whose back I may almost literally say I sailed to Crucis, I enjoyed the trip exceedingly.

About an hour after dusk, we arrived at Gorgona, and stopped at the base of a small hill, on the right bank of the river, where we found several empty canoes that had just landed their

passengers for the night. Jumping ashore, and ascending the hill, we soon came to a wretched-looking cane hut, which, I suppose, is the hotel, *par excellence*, of the river, and which rejoices in the appellation of *rancho blanco;* although every thing connected with it is as black and filthy as it is possible to imagine. Here we found assembled about twenty-five travellers; and the number was presently increased by the arrival of a small party that had come part of the way by land, their canoe having been capsized a few miles above, owing to the unskilful management of the negroes. One of the natives was drowned, and the passengers had lost all their baggage. More lives would have been sacrificed, but for the skill and courage of a Kanaka female, the wife of one of the passengers, who happened fortunately to be on board. Like the generality of her countrywomen, she was an admirable swimmer, and, after saving her husband, and bringing him to the shore, she returned and brought out several of the other passengers who were unable to swim, and who would certainly have been lost but for her aid. She was a stout, well-formed woman, with the dark complexion and characteristic features of the Sandwich Islanders. We were, of course, loud in our praises of the heroism she had displayed; but she took it all very modestly, and

seemed unconscious of having done any thing out of the way.

In the bustle and excitement consequent on the arrival of so many passengers, we found it a matter of no small difficulty to get any of the people of the house to attend to us; and it was only after strenuous and persevering exertions that we eventually succeeded in obtaining a cup of coffee, but without any thing to eat with it. This, with a roll that I had luckily thrown into my carpet-bag, in the apprehension of such a contingency, formed the whole of my supper; and yet I fared better than several of my companions, who could get nothing whatever to eat. Having partially appeased the cravings of my appetite, I had time to look around me, and found that the house, which, as I have said before, was built of cane, contained but two apartments, one of which was the kitchen. Over the latter, I perceived a large bamboo frame, placed horizontally upon two cross-beams, at a considerable height from the ground; and, to my surprise, learned that this formed the floor of the bedchamber destined for our party. Such as it was, however, we thought it better to sleep, if sleep were possible, on the ribs of the bamboo than to lie on the floor of the room, which was damp and filthy, and already almost entirely preoccupied. Seven or eight of us, therefore,

mounted up to this uninviting cockloft by a stairs composed of an upright post, with notches in it to serve as steps, there being nothing to support the weight of the body by but the post itself. This was the more inconvenient, from the circumstance of the latter being loose, and requiring one person to hold it while the other mounted. The last person who attempted to ascend was sorely perplexed, for he found the utmost difficulty in getting any one to assist him; all the people below being so fatigued, and apprehensive of losing their places on the floor, and being driven to others less comfortable, that they were indisposed to move an inch. At last, one of the people of the house took compassion on him, and helped him up.

Our night quarters, although admirably adapted as a roosting-place for fowls, was neither calculated to afford us the facility of adopting the position most in favour amongst the feathered tribe, or of stretching our limbs comfortably after the fashion of man. The bamboo frame was, as might have been anticipated, so rough and uneven, that, notwithstanding the efforts that we made, by the aid of our blankets, to render it endurable, it was impossible to obtain a moment's rest upon it. The ridge pole of the roof, not being more than a few feet from the frame, it was equally impracticable for us to

seek relief by perching after the fashion of our galline predecessors. To put a climax to our miseries, we were packed together as close as we could lie; and the smoke from the fire underneath puffing up in thick clouds, between its pungent influence and the caloric evolved from our bodies, we ran imminent risk of suffocation.

Amongst the persons subjected to this fumigatory process were three officers in the United States navy, and an assistant-surgeon belonging to their vessel. Although accustomed to perch aloft in all sorts of weather, I question whether they had ever encountered such a hard night's service as they were compelled to undergo on the bamboo spars of this detestable cockloft. Such shifting and turning, and restless feverishness, alternated by the most pitiable groans and the most ludicrous maledictions, it has never been my lot to assist in; and I need not say that, when morning broke, we were but too happy to swing ourselves down from our uncomfortable elevation, and, after a scanty and hurried meal, to bid adieu to a place of entertainment without a parallel in the discomforts of road-side adventure.

Entering our canoes soon after dawn, we rowed down the river to Chagres, and arrived there after a passage of between six and seven hours, during nearly the whole of which time the rain poured

down in torrents on us. Of all the filthy towns I have ever seen—and it has happened to me to visit many in different parts of the world—I must accord the palm to this place. The population numbers about one thousand souls, and consists almost entirely of negroes, the dirtiest and most indolent of the race. It is impossible to walk through any part of the town without sinking up to one's ancles in mud. Such an impression does the appearance of this place make on the majority of the Americans, that I was told, as rather an amusing illustration of it, that two persons who had recently sold off their property in the States, with the intention of settling in California, had no sooner set eyes upon Chagres, than they determined on returning home, one of them declaring that nothing on earth would induce him to cross the Isthmus.

There are but few Americans settled here, the climate being in general fatal to foreigners. I had scarcely arrived before I began to feel the effects of it on my own frame, in a general lassitude and depression of spirits. A good deal of this may be attributable to local causes, susceptible of modification, with improved habits and greater attention to cleanliness on the part of the population.

The only object worthy of notice here is the fort at the mouth of the river. It is situated on

a rocky acclivity, from 100 to 250 feet high, and must have been originally a place of considerable strength. It is mounted with Spanish guns, for the most part of brass, and with the usual emblematic device upon them. There are also a few mortars; but they have been so neglected, that the carriages have rotted away, and they are now totally unfit for use. The magazine contains about fifty boxes of powder; which, owing to exposure to the moistness of the atmosphere (the door having fallen off its hinges from decay), has got caked together, and is consequently unserviceable. The barracks, a long, two-storied building, and the out-offices connected with them, are rapidly falling to ruin.

Although anxious to get away from this dismal place as speedily as possible, I preferred waiting for the Falcon steamer to embarking on board the Alabama—the first vessel announced to sail—in the hope of visiting New Orleans; a city I had long been desirous of seeing. After a rapid and uneventful passage, we at length entered the Mississippi; but I was disappointed in the object with which I had taken my place on board the Falcon, the Ohio meeting us at night, on her way down, and taking on board all the passengers bound for New York.

APPENDIX.

The rapid changes that have taken place in the brief interval that has elapsed since the author's departure from California, render an *abregé* of the intelligence received from that country up to the present period a desirable addition to the present work.

The files of papers, containing accounts to the 1st of October, bring the following interesting news :—

"Discoveries have been made which almost induce us to believe that the whole country, from San Diego to Cape Mendocina; from the Pacific to the topmost ridge of the Nevada; and Heaven knows how much further eastward! has been completely seasoned and spiced with the yellow grains. News reached San Francisco of a large "placer" having been found on Trinity River—a stream which rises in the Coast Range, and empties into the Pacific, opposite the head of Sacramento Valley. The story was soon verified by intelligence from the diggings on the American Fork, which stated that the diggers were leaving in large bodies for the Trinity placer, where men were said to wash out $100 a day. It is best to receive the stories of gold-digging, even here, with a grain of allowance; but the main fact is true. I lately saw a letter from a merchant in Sacramento city to his partner in San Francisco :—'There is good news from Trinity River; gold is very plenty, and provisions scarce. We shall make a great raise on the loads I have sent there.'

"Near the Mission of San Antonio, situated among the coast mountains, sixty miles south of this, a washing of considerable richness has been discovered. At the last accounts, a number of people were working them with fair success, and traders are beginning to send their teams in that direction. Gold is said to exist in small quantities near the Mission of Carmel, only four miles from this town; and, in fact, there is every geological indication of it. That San Francisco itself is built on a placer, I am well satisfied. To my certain knowledge, boys have picked up $4 and $5 in a few hours, from clay dug thirty feet below the surface, in sinking a well. The story of Mr. Harrison, the collector, having found gold in the *adobès* of the Custom-House, is something more than a joke. But by far the most magnificent discovery is that recently made upon the *ranché* of Colonel Fremont, on the Mariposas River. It is nothing less than a vein of gold in the solid rock—a *bona fide* mine—the first which has been found in California. Whether it was first detected by a party of Sonomans, or by the company which Colonel Fremont organized last spring, and which has been working in the same locality, is a disputed point; though, I believe, the credit is due to the latter. At any rate, the gold is there, and in extraordinary abundance. I saw some specimens which were in Colonel Fremont's possession. The stone is a reddish quartz, filled with rich veins of gold, and far surpassing the specimens brought from North Carolina and Georgia. Some stones picked up on the top of the quartz strata, without particular selection, yielded 2 oz. of gold to every 25℔. Colonel Fremont informed me, that the vein had been traced for more than a mile. The thickness on the surface is 2 feet, gradually widening as it descends, and showing larger particles of gold. The dip downward is only about 20 degrees, so that the mine can be worked with little expense. These are the particulars first given me when the discovery was first

announced. Still more astonishing facts have just come to light. A geologist sent out to examine the place arrived here last night. He reports having traced the vein a distance of two leagues, with an average breadth of 150 feet. At one extremity of the mine he found large quantities of native silver, which he calculates will fully pay the expense of setting up machinery and working it. The *ranché* upon which it is situated was purchased by Colonel Fremont, in 1846, from Alvarado, former governor of the territory. It was then considered nearly worthless; and Colonel Fremont only took it at the moment of leaving the country, because disappointed in obtaining another property. This discovery has made a great sensation throughout the country, yet it is but the first of many such. The Sierra Nevada is pierced in every part with these priceless veins, which will produce gold for centuries after every spot of earth, from base to summit, shall have been turned over and washed out.

"So much for the gold. In other respects, the country is tolerably quiet; speculation in lots, though still going on, having assumed a more cautious character. San Francisco, Stocton, Sacramento city, and San José, still maintain their value. Benecia lots are rather dull, and have slightly fallen; while Colonel Stevens's New York of the Pacific, with its awkward and absurd title, does not seem to be thought of. A town named Vernon, at the mouth of Feather River, is rising rapidly to notice, and another is said to be springing up on Trinity River. Many persons have made large fortunes by buying up lots at lucky times, and selling them still more luckily. A case was told me of a young man who, last fall, borrowed money to pay his passage from the Sandwich Islands to San Francisco, and who is now on his way home with $80,000 made in this manner. Three or four gentlemen, who came up in the Panama, have already made $20,000 by similar operations. A friend of

mine, who shipped lumber from New York to the amount of $1000, sold it here for $14,000. Houses that cost $300, sell readily for $3000; and the demand is constantly increasing. At least 75 houses have been imported from Canton, and are put up by Chinese carpenters. Nearly all the chairs in private families are of Chinese manufacture; and there are two *restaurants* in the town kept by Kang-sung and Wang-tong, where every palatable chow-chow, curry, and tarts, are served up by the Celestials. Washing is still $8 a dozen; and the consequence is, large quantities of soiled linen are sent to our antipodes to be purified. A vessel just in from Canton brought 250 dozen, which were sent out a few months ago; another, from the Sandwich Islands, brought 100 dozen; and the practice is now becoming general. San Francisco is, in fact, more metropolitan in its character than any port in the world. Its trade with all parts of the Pacific is rapidly increasing. The overland emigration is pouring into the country in a full tide. The reports that reached here of distress on the routes, and the certainty that many would need aid before reaching the settlements, caused a public movement in favour of raising supplies to send out on the routes. Private individuals and companies contributed largely; and General Riley, on being applied to, promptly gave a *carte blanche* to Major Cauley and Captain Kain, of the Q. M. department, to furnish all the assistance in their power. Several hundred pack-mules, under the charge of competent officers, have been sent to Vallecitos, at the edge of the great desert, and to the sink of Humboldt's River, in the great basin, the places where emigrants will most require aid. Word has reached us that many waggons have stopped at the latter place, unable to proceed further. I have heard of no such distress on the northern route as the southern. The emigrants in the north, so far as I learn, have not been molested by the Indians; while the hostilities of the Yumas and

Maricopas, at the Colorado crossing, have already cost the companies on the Gila the loss of several lives.

"As to prices, all mining tools are high, as are also all articles upon which labour has been performed here. Picks, $5; pans, $5; cradles for washing gold, three feet long, worth $2 in the States, sell here for $40; flour, from $8 to $10 per hundred; pork, $50 per hundred; coffee, $18; board, $21 per week, or $1 50 cents per meal, with the privilege of sleeping under the nearest tree unoccupied. At the mines, sixty miles distant, the prices are doubled, and of some things trebled. Brandy, $2 per bottle. At the mines they are making, on an average, an ounce of gold per day. One man who arrived here this month, made in two weeks $25,000, and has gone to San Francisco to take passage for the States. Labour is in proportion to the produce of the mines, ranging from $8 to $18 per day.

"Vessels continue to arrive at San Francisco from the United States. When I left there, two weeks ago, 102 vessels had arrived out of the 250 which sailed from different ports in the United States during the winter and spring. Since then, they are beginning to crowd in more rapidly. I was this morning informed, though not from the most reliable authority, that forty-five had arrived in two days. The harbour presents for miles an unbroken forest of masts; ships from every nation and country lie here idle and worthless, with no prospect of ever leaving: many must go down at their anchor, for there are not men enough unemployed to work the twentieth part of them. The men will leave; there is no way of detaining them for duty on board: the naval force has been weakened by desertion; and there is no human effort or possibility to prevent the 'custom' of deserting. Commander Jones has barely force enough on board to form a crew, much less to tender assistance to merchantmen. There are yet scores of vessels in port that have been months endeavouring to discharge; some

have no consignees, others too many; many have captains, while numbers are without them, and without use for the commodity. We have many converted into storehouses, hotels, lodging-houses, and hospitals. This is the only place in the world where Jack forgets the sanctity of the forecastle."

The "New York Herald" gives a less favourable view of the intelligence from the mines. It says:—

"The intelligence from California is interesting, but by no means so favourable as generally anticipated. The Oregon, at Panama, from San Francisco, brought about $400,000 on freight, and the passengers have about $200,000 in their trunks. This makes a total of about $4,000,000 received from the gold mines of California. Our advices from San Francisco are to the 1st of October. The digging season at this time was nearly over; and the miners were flocking into San Francisco in large numbers, on their way to the Atlantic ports. We learn that steamers for Panama, which are to leave California during the next four months, have been already filled up, and that tickets command a large premium. It appears by this, that there is as much anxiety to get away from as to get to San Francisco. The miners have not made out so well this season as they did last, or as they expected. It is estimated, that about 100,000 have gone in the mines this season, and that the average product of gold-dust has not been more than $4 per head.

"The Convention at Monterey was still in Session. It had been agreed to prohibit slavery; though free negroes were not to be permitted to enter the state. Pueblo San José had been agreed upon as the seat of government. The right of suffrage was to be extended to all free white male citizens of the United States, after six months' residence in the state. Banks of discount were to be prohibited, and banks of deposit strictly protected. The boundary agreed upon includes all Alta-California; but an effort would be made to confine it to the Sierra Nevada, on the east. The

districts had been arranged in the following order:—1, San Diego, Los Angelos, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo; 2, Monterey and San Francisco; 3, San José and Sonoma; 4, Sacramento and San Joachin."

The "Pacific News" (San Francisco), of the 15th of November, says:—

"We have had the pleasure of conversing with a very intelligent gentleman, who has just returned from a long tour of observation through the mining district. His investigations have led him to the conclusion that its greatest riches have not yet been reached, but still await the labours of miners more experienced and skilful than those engaged in the work. He saw personally several diggings, richer far than those in relation to which our credulity has already been severely taxed. At the same time, he places the average gain of the whole body of miners now employed at a considerably lower figure than is usually given. He thinks that mining, having been, as heretofore conducted, a game of chance, and uncertain as a lottery, or a fair-bank, is now about to become a less hazardous game of skill and scientific calculation, at which good and experienced players, and they only, will be sure largely to win. The observation of our informant fully confirms the general impression that there is to be a serious deficiency in the winter stock of provisions in the mining regions, without allowing anything for the consumption of the overland emigration now on its way thither."

An influential memorial from the merchants and traders of New York had been presented to the President, asking for the establishment of a *direct* semi-monthly mail between that port and Chagres. This line, if established, and the line already provided for by act of Congress, carrying the mails between New York, Charleston, Savannah, Havannah, New Orleans, and Chagres, would give to the whole Atlantic coast a means of intercourse with the Pacific far exceeding those now enjoyed, and yet no more than is required by the vast emigrations to the gold regions, and the

commercial interests which have sprung up in that region.

Files of papers from San Francisco, extending to the 1st of December, mention that the elections had taken place and passed off quietly, and resulted in the success of the whole ticket, in opposition to the people's ticket party. Several suicides had taken place. The British bark Collooney, Livingstone, from Oregon, *viâ* Vancouver's Island, had been seized by the collector of San Francisco, for a violation of the revenue laws, in bringing cargo from one American port to another.

A good deal of interest had been excited in San Francisco by the exhibition of some remarkable specimens of gold, embedded in quartz rocks, said to have been found in inexhaustible quarries through the mountainous region which forms the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. Gold had also been discovered within ten miles of Panama.

The following extract is from the President's Message, delivered to the thirty-first Congress of the United States, dated the 24th of December:—

"The great mineral wealth of California, and the advantages which its ports and harbours, and those of Oregon, afford to commerce, especially with the islands of the Pacific and Indian oceans, and the popular regions of Eastern Asia, make it certain that there will arise, in a few years, large and prosperous communities on our western coast. It therefore becomes important that a line of communication, the best and most expeditious which the nature of the country will admit, should be opened within the territory of the United States, from the navigable waters of the Atlantic, or the Gulf of Mexico, to the Pacific. Opinion, as elicited and expressed by two large and respectable conventions, lately assembled at St. Louis and Memphis, points to a railroad, as that which, if practicable, will best meet the wishes and wants of the country. But while this, if in successful operation, would be a work of great national importance, and of a value to

the country which it would be difficult to estimate, it ought also to be regarded as an undertaking of vast magnitude and expense, and one which must, if it be indeed practicable, encounter many difficulties in its construction and use. Therefore, to avoid failure and disappointment; to enable Congress to judge whether, in the condition of the country through which it must pass, the work be feasible; and, if it be found so, whether it should be undertaken as a national improvement, or left to individual enterprise; and, in the latter alternative, what aid, if any, ought to be extended to it by the Government—I recommend, as a preliminary measure, a careful *reconnaisance* of the several proposed routes by a scientific corps; and a report as to the practicability of making such a road, with an estimate of the cost of its construction and support."

Accounts from San Francisco, to the 31st December, state that rather a serious fire had taken place in that city, occasioning a destruction of property to the value of $2,000,000. The loss had principally fallen on the American and Chili settlers. Twenty-five houses had been burned, and nearly an acre of ground laid bare. In a week after, such was the extraordinary energy of the sufferers, that the site was already half-covered with houses, built and building. While the fire was still burning, one of the parties who had lost most heavily by the conflagration, bargained for and purchased lumber to rebuild his house; and, before six o'clock the same evening, he had concluded and signed a contract with a builder to reconstruct his house in sixteen days, under a penalty.

The progress of San Francisco is described as perfectly wonderful, and as finding no parallel in its bustling activity and restless energy, save the great metropolis of the world—London itself. Immense sums were being continually drained out of the country; in November alone, $2,300,000 in gold-dust had been exported; but, on the other hand, in the latter week

of December, $700,000 had arrived from various parts of the world: so that, in fact, the progress of this place might be said to be, in some degree, paid for by foreign capital actually brought into the country.

Under the above date (31st December), we have a short price-current of articles as sold at San Francisco.

Coals sold on board, free of expense to the shipper, at $40, $45, and one parcel at $50 per ton, but falling; $35 is the safest quotation.

Ale, Tennants and Byass's, $4 50c. to $5 per dozen, wholesale.

Bricks, Garnkirk and Stourbridge, $45 per 1,000; great demand.

Carpeting, Brussels, $2 50c. to $3; Kidderminster, $2; Axminster, $1 6c.

Blankets, Witney, assorted, $4 to $5 per pair.

Coloured cotton shirts, $7 to $8 per dozen.

Merino drawers, $22 per dozen; woollen hose, (grey) $7 to $8 per dozen.

Merino shirts, $27 to $28 per dozen; Flushing trousers, $4 50c. per pair.

Pea-jackets and coats, $8 to $10 each; brogans, (English) $24 to $28 per dozen.

Heavy boots, pegged, $20 per pair, for fair quality; ditto, pegged, superior quality, $40 to $60 per pair. Long fishing-boots, well nailed, are worth $100 a-pair. The streets of San Francisco are such sloughs and quagmires of mud, that good, long, thick boots, to come over the knee, are worth almost their weight in gold.

Preserved meats, 25c. to 30c. per ℔.

Drugs, abundant; no sales.

Red and blue flannel shirts, $18 to $20 per dozen. Macintosh waterproofs unsaleable.

Silks, in great demand; large consignments from China sold at very high prices.

Prints, fast colours; dark, rich styles, $4 50c. to

$5 per piece. The style of prints that do well here are such as are in accordance with Mexican recommendations.

There is a considerable trade springing up with Mexico; and there is no doubt that the business hitherto done between that country and Valparaiso and Lima is being diverted to this market.

Iron houses are very abundant, but in slight demand. Ready-made houses of all classes, and of every material, are abundant and unsaleable. The rage for them has completely died away. But building materials of iron and zinc would sell well.

Chili flour sold lately as high as $45 per sack or 200℔, on shore: the price is now $26 to $28. Flour has been a splendid speculation lately. In three days, it rose from $8 to $32 per sack of 200℔, and in a week was up to $45. A vessel came in from Chili when the rage was at its height. She cleared $50,000 gain to the shipper, and made $10,000 commissions to the consignee.

The following details, extracted from Mr. Ewing's official report to Congress, will be found interesting:—

"Thus, it appears that the deposits of gold, wherever found, are the property of the United States. Those, however, which are known to exist upon the lands of individuals are of small comparative importance; by far the larger part being upon unclaimed public lands. Still, our information respecting them is yet extremely limited. What we know, in general, is that they are of great extent and extraordinary productiveness, even though rudely wrought. The gold is found sometimes in masses, the largest of which brought to the Mint weighed 89 oz. They are generally equal to the standard of our coin in purity; and their appearance is that of a metal forced into the fissures and cavities of the rocks in a state of fusion. Some masses, however, are flattened, apparently by pressure, and scratched, as if by attrition in a rough surface. One small mass which was exhibited, had

about five parts in weight of gold to one of quartz, intimately blended, and both together bouldered, so as to form a handsome, rounded pebble, with a surface of about equal quartz and gold. A very large proportion of the gold, however, is obtained in small scales, by washing the earth which is dug upon the beds of the streams, or near their margin. A mass of the crude earth, as taken at random from a "placer," was tested by the director of the United States Mint at Philadelphia, and found to contain 264¼ grains of gold, being in value a fraction over $10 to 100lb. It cannot, however, be reasonably supposed that the average alluvial earth in the "placers" is so highly auriferous. No existing law puts it in the power of the Executive to regulate these mines, or protect them from intrusion. Hence, in addition to our own citizens, thousands of all nations and languages flock in and gather gold, which they carry away to enrich themselves, leaving the land so much the less in value by what they have abstracted; and they render for it no remuneration, direct or indirect, to the Government or people of the United States. Our laws, so strict in the preservation of public property, that they punish our own citizens for cutting timber on the public lands, ought not to permit strangers who are not, and who never intend to become citizens, to enter at pleasure on these lands, and take from them the gold which constitutes nearly all their value. Some legal provision is necessary for the protection and disposition of these mines; and it is a matter worthy of much consideration how they should be disposed of, so as best to promote the public interest, and encourage individual enterprise."

In a mercantile point of view, the discoveries of quicksilver are scarcely less interesting than those of the precious metals. We are informed by this same authority, that—

"The deposit of quicksilver known to exist in California is a sulphuret of mercury, or native cin-

nabar. The stratum of mineral, several feet in thickness, has been traced for a considerable distance along its line of strike. The specimens assayed at the Mint, range from 15·5 to 33·35 per cent. of metal; it is easy of access, and is mined and reduced without difficulty. So much of the mine as has been traced is situated on a *ranché*, to which the title is properly valid; and since the United States took possession of the country, an attempt has been made to acquire title to the mine by denouncement. This proceeding is, for the reasons that I have already given, invalid. It therefore remains for Congress to determine whether they will relinquish or assert the title of the United States to this mine."

From the news received up to the 31st of January, it appears that, owing to the interior being flooded by the melting of the snows of the Sierra Nevada and other mountains, the numerous roads and ways of approach to the gold region had become nearly all impassable. The consequence was, that no gold came down; and, what with the deficiency of supply, the continual drain of gold exported (chiefly to Chili, Sydney, and the Atlantic states), and the large sums expended in land speculations and in building, there existed in San Francisco a general scarcity of money without a parallel in any commercial country. This scarcity was all but universal. There did not seem to be more than sufficient money in the place to pay for the ordinary supplies of existence; and the few who had money were very naturally, and with just reason, reluctant to part with it. Great distrust prevailed.

The rates of interest were such as in England appears preposterous. The old rate of 10 per cent. a-month was becoming fast exploded; 12½ and 15 per cent. per month, on *security of real estate*, was getting common; and 1 per cent. *per day* discount on notes was allowed; though very few negociations of the latter class were taking place, money-lenders requiring the security of real property of the most ample kind.

Lumber had fallen from $400 to $90 and $100 per 1,000 feet. Flour was down from $30 to $40, which it reached a few weeks previous, to $13 and $14 per sack.

It is supposed that large sums in gold had accumulated in the mining districts, and the reports of a few persons who had found their way down from some of the "diggins" were favourable. There was no scarcity of provisions in any part of the mining districts.

The city of Sacramento had been flooded for three weeks previously. The streets were navigated by boats; and about 8,000 to 10,000 of the inhabitants had left the town, and were living in tents pitched on a spit of dry land between the city and Sutter's Fort. The country around the city was one sea of water. For sixty miles below it, the eye rested on little else than water, within the range of the horizon, on both sides of the river. It was the same above the city. The destruction of property had been considerable. For twenty miles, the banks of the Sacramento were strewn with the carcasses of drowned horned cattle; and the squatters all along its banks were confined to their houses, or rather cabins, or to a foot or two of mud by their doors. The scene of desolation defies description.

The flood had caused a complete suspension of business in Sacramento; and, what was more deplorable, an almost total suspension of payments. A correspondent of one of the papers writes to this effect:—

"The present state of matters in general stands something in this way: many of the merchants in San Francisco have over-speculated in land, buildings, and other *promising* objects of profit. The dealers in the interior towns imitated the merchants; but they not only speculated in land, but they also *over-bought goods*, particularly lumber and flour, beyond their means. Now, the time of payment for the goods has arrived, and the immediate consequences are manifest enough. The dealer, because he added a speculative game of

chance to his proper business, cannot pay the merchant; the merchant cannot wait for his money, not so much because he sold on a term of credit which is expired, but because his speculations have absorbed his available resources. This system will, it is much to be feared, in too many cases, reflect back upon the shippers, who had no hand in the game, although their property set the cards agoing. Amongst the merchants of this place there are exceptions to the rule, men who have confined their operations to their legitimate business of factors; but there are too many who did not do so; and I anticipate ruinous consequences to themselves, and losses to their shippers abroad, particularly in Chili and the Atlantic states.

"The present pressure on the money-market is increased by a renewed demand for land lots in the town of Benicia, which was allowed 'to waste its sweetness on the desert air' for the last eight months unnoticed. The site of this town is only thirty-five miles from San Francisco, across the Bay. It is now attempted to puff it into favour, as being a more eligible port than San Francisco. If the speculators had begun their operations before they allowed San Francisco to fill its port with a fleet of merchantmen unequalled out of Europe and the Atlantic states; before San Francisco became a large town, extending, as it now does, over a space of three miles; and before many millions of dollars were invested in property in the town; and before large sums were expended in improving its harbour—then Benicia might have been made something of; now I think the attempt is too late."

Advices to the 1st of February state that the wet weather had nearly put a stop to business. The inundation of the Sacramento had subsided At Sonorian camps much gold had been found, one entire piece weighing upwards of 23lb. It was reported that a piece of nearly 85lb had been picked up. Vessels continued to arrive at the rate of from six to twelve each day. Prices for everything had ruled rather

high in the fall. The Council at San Francisco had established a chain-gang of criminals, for the purpose of employing them in public improvements. A slight earthquake had been experienced. The population of San Francisco alone was estimated at 50,000. The prices for meat and vegetables were very high. All the accounts agreed that a fair yield has been derived from the mines. The pressure of money still continued great.

The most interesting event in the transactions of the United States Congress, in reference to California, was the introduction of a series of resolutions into the Senate by Mr. Elby. These resolutions proposed an amicable arrangement of all the controverted topics between the free and slave states. The first maintained the admission of California into the American Union, free from any restriction on the exclusion or introduction of slavery within its limits. In the second resolution, it was provided that territorial government should be established by Congress in the territories acquired from Mexico, without the imposition of any condition on the subject of slavery. The third and fourth resolutions contended that the Western boundary of Texas should be fixed on the Rio del Norte, from its mouth to the mouth of the Sabine. The fifth and sixth asserted that slavery ought not to be abolished in the districts of Columbia, during the existence of the institution of Maryland, without the consent of the people of the district, and a just compensation to the owners of the slaves; and that the slave-trade, under certain conditions, should be abolished within the federal districts, as repugnant to the common feelings of mankind. In the two final resolutions, it was urged that provision should be made by Congress for the more effectual restitution of slaves in any state or territory; and that Congress had no power to prohibit the trade in slaves between the several states: that being an arrangement to be decided, according to the principles of the constitution, by the

particular laws of the states themselves, they were ordered to be made the subject of special consideration in the Senate.

The Hon. Mr. King, late a member of Congress, from Georgia, and who was sent to California last spring by the President, on a special mission, for the purpose of examining and closely investigating all matters of interest in that region, in treating of the population in his report, assumes, as a minimum, that San Francisco has 25,000 inhabitants, which number will be doubled during the present year. Sacramento city, which in April, 1849, had only 100 inhabitants, has now 10,000. He estimates the export of gold, for 1850, at $30,000,000; and he considers the amount hitherto collected as small, compared with what it will be, when scientific and skilful miners commence their operations to that extent which the capabilities of the country will admit.

THE END.

F. Shoberl, Jun., Printer to H.R.H. Prince Albert, Rupert St., Haymarket.