

## CHAPTER X.

ONE morning, at break of day, I left Monterey for a tramp among the hills; the natives by this time had become pacifically disposed, and there were no serious apprehensions of getting a hide necklace thrown over one's head, in shape of the unerring lasso, if perchance a Yankee strayed too far from his quarters. The war was virtually ended in California: there was no further hope for gold chains or wooden legs; the glory had been reaped by the first comers; and I made the time and shot fly together, ranging about the suburbs. With a fowling-piece on my arm, and a carbine slung to the back of an attendant, we pursued a tortuous path, through a gap in the hills, to the southward, and after a four or five miles' walk we found ourselves at the Mission of Carmelo. It is within a mile of the sea, protected by a neck of land, close to a rapid clear stream of the same name. A quaint old church, falling to decay, with crumbling tower and belfry, broken roofs, and long lines of mud-built dwellings, all in ruins, is what remains of a once flourishing and wealthy settlement. It still presents a picturesque appearance, standing on a little rise, above a broad fertile plain of many acres, adjacent to the banks of the river, and at the base a large orchard of fruits and flowers. Following up the stream for some leagues, through the same rich level, crossing and re-crossing the pure running water,

with noble salmon flashing their silver sides at every fathom, we soon bagged as much game as we could stagger under: wild ducks, quail, partridges, hares of a very large size, and rabbits. Not contented with this we left the valley, and struck through a narrow gorge of the adjoining hills. Here I caught a glimpse of a trio of *coyotes* and instantly blazed away with the carbine, which brought one of them tumbling down the steep, but much to my surprise his two friends followed, and actually bolstered up their wounded comrade, and assisted him out of sight before I could send another bullet. They were as large as wolves, of a light yellowish brown, with long sharp snouts, bushy hanging tails, and a gait like the trot of a dog. They are very disagreeable customers to sheep and other small fry, and, as I discovered subsequently, that when badly wounded, they have a very unpleasant way with their teeth. Continuing onward, and hardly recovered from my astonishment at the rencounter with the *coyotes*, when up bounded, within thirty yards, three large deer, and with the coolest impudence stared me full in the face. *Maldito!* the carbine was again in the hands of my companion, some distance behind, but I could not resist the temptation of giving a strapping buck a hail-storm of fine shot between the eyes. Even this only made the party a little frisky, kick up their heels, toss their heads, and wag their short tails. I was in hopes the carbine would reach me in time to send the lead more in a lump, but in another moment they sprang off like the wind, and the next seen of them was in company with a large herd, a mile away, with their graceful bodies and limbs standing in clear relief against the blue sky. I had not a doubt but that they were relating my chagrin as a capital buckish joke. By this time we had penetrated so far from ravine to hill as to have completely



lost our bearings, and becoming quite bewildered, I began to entertain serious ideas of seeking some place of shelter for the night. My attendant, too, had fallen down two or three times from exhaustion, the sun was rapidly declining, and I was not at all pleased with the wild appearance of the hills and valleys that encircled us. Throwing away the greater part of our game, we made a toilsome effort, and reached the crest of an adjacent height, in hopes of getting a glimpse of the plains of Carmelo. Again we were disappointed; and while on the point of making the best of our bargain, by risking a hug from grizzly bears or panthers during the night, I espied a horseman slowly winding his way beneath us in the gorge. By discharging a barrel of my piece, and continued shouts, we soon attracted attention, and thus being encouraged by the sight of a fellow-being, we sprang briskly down the steep. However, our ally evinced no violent affection for us, and in a trice wheeled his horse up the opposite face of the acclivity; there he paused, well out of gun-shot, and presently I heard a shrill voice crying, "*Que es lo que quiere?*" "We are lost," I replied; "will you assist us?" With many a wary glance and movement, he at last came frankly towards us, and I then discovered an intelligent little fellow, about ten years of age, astride a powerful animal, which he guided by a single thong of hide. Slipping from the saddle, and letting his lasso fall on the ground, he doffed his broad glazed *sombrero*, and stood awaiting my wishes. On learning our situation he gladly volunteered to guide us, and in return told me that he had been all day seeking stray cattle among the mountains, that the bears were very numerous, and that we had described a wide circuit around the hills, and were within a short league of the Mission. This last was highly gratifying information, and

mounting my worn-out attendant on the horse, our little guide took the bridle, and led the way towards the valley. It was quite dark on reaching the stream, and I felt thoroughly knocked up, but a few minutes bathe in the chill water gave me new life, and shortly after we were housed in the great hall of the Mission. It chanced to be Sunday evening, moreover, during carnival, and there were preparations for a more brilliant fandango than the usual weekly affair generally produced. A few horses were picketed about the great *patio*, and two or three ox-carts with hide bodies were serving for boudoirs to damsels, who had come from afar to mingle in the ball. But the company had not yet assembled in the old hall, that had once served the good *frayles* for a refectory; and on entering I was kindly welcomed by the Patrona Margarita, and her handsome coquettish daughter, Domatilda, who were the liege and lady hostesses of the Carmelo Mission. With her own hands the jolly madre soon prepared me an *olla podrida* of tomatoes, peppers, and the remains in my game bag. Then her laughing nymph patted me some *tortillas*; and after eating ravenously, and draining a cup of *aguadiente*, the hospitable old lady tumbled me into her own spacious couch, which stood in an angle of the hall, and giving me a hearty slap on the back, shouted, "*Duerma usted bien hijo mio hasta media noche*"—Sleep like a top until midnight. I needed no second bidding, and in a moment was buried in deep sleep. Unconscious of fleeting hours, I was at length restored to life, but in the most disordered frame of mind; suffering under a most complicated attack of nightmare, of which bear-hugs, murders, manacles and music present but a slight idea of my agony; and indeed, when after pinching myself, and tearing my eyelids fairly open, I had still great difficulty in



recalling my erring faculties. I found my own individual person deluged with a swarm of babies, who were lying athwart ships, and amid ships, fore and aft, heads and toes, every way; and one interesting infant, just teething, was sucking vigorously away on the left lobe of my ear, while another lovingly entwined its little fingers in my whiskers. Nor was this half the bodily miseries I had so innocently endured. A gay youth, with a dripping link, nicely balanced against my boots, was sitting on my legs, with a level space on the bed before him, intently playing *monté*, to the great detriment of the purses of his audience. On glancing around, I beheld the lofty apartment lighted by long tallow candles melted against the walls, whose smoke clung in dense clouds around the beams of the lofty hall; the floor was nearly filled, at the lower end, with groups of swarthy Indians and paisanos, sipping aguadiente, or indulging in the same exciting amusement as the gentleman sitting on my feet. On either side were double rows of men and women, moving in the most bewildering mazes of the *contra danza*: turning and twisting, twining and whirling with unceasing rapidity, keeping time to most inspiriting music, of harps and guitars; whilst ever and anon, some delighted youth would elevate his voice, in a shout of ecstasy, at the success of some bright-eyed señorita in the dance: *Ay, mi alma! Toma la bolsa! Caramba!*—Go it, my beauty! Take my purse! Beautiful!—It took me but an instant to appreciate all this; and then, being fully roused to my wrongs, I gave one vigorous spring, which sent the *monté* man, candle, cards, and coppers, flying against the wall, and bounding to my feet I made a dash at the Patrona, drank all the *licores* on the tray, and seizing her around the waist, away we spun through the fandango. Long before rosy morn I had become as merry and delighted as

the rest of the company. I bought a dirty pack of cards for a rial, and opened a monte bank, for coppers and paper cigars, and although a select party of Indios did their best to impose upon my youth and inexperience, yet on receiving their treasure of *centavos*, winning a hatful of cigarritos, and only paying half a one for *importas*, I comprehended by their guttural exclamations that their *compadre* was not so verdant a person as they at first imagined. Thus I left them to their reflections, and busied myself swearing love, and sipping *dulces* with the brunettas; vowing friendship to the men; drinking strong waters; promising to redress all grievances, to pay all claims out of my own pocket for the government; and ended by repudiating the Yankees, and swearing myself a full-blooded Californian. However, these ebullitions were partially attributable to the heated rooms, and *licores* of Madre Mariqueta; but when the golden sun came streaming into the house, the links had formed heavy stalactites against the walls; and notwithstanding the earnest solicitations of my new made friends, I jumped up behind my little guide of the evening previous, and galloped off towards Monterey.

Thus passed my first visit to Carmelo, and scarcely a week went by that I did not enjoy a supper of one of the Patrona's capital ollas, with may be a little wholesome exercise to digest it, at the evening fandango—it was the only place where could be seen a dash of native life, but even this lost its charm. During carnival, I made my homage to all who were docile enough, and I must add clean enough to receive it; but whether owing to a want of tact, fervor, or devotion, I failed to keep the mercury up to boiling point, and after presenting one slim little doña with a two shilling brooch of great magnitude and brilliancy—crushing



dozens of variegated eggs on the shining tresses of others, and nearly driving a horse distracted through the agency of enormous spurs, in hopes to show my skill and win a smile from one in particular—I at last, through weariness and disgust, gave up the chase, and became a devoted lover of chasing still wilder game in the beautiful regions around. For days and weeks I did naught but ride and hunt, and became so inured to long fatiguing tramps and night bivouacs, that with the ever-varying excitement of the sport, I not only slept the sounder in the open air, but enjoyed better health than I had before known. The climate of the interior is far dryer, clearer and more salubrious than by the sea. On the coast we were frequently for many successive days, annoyed by raw, foggy weather, and on one occasion there was a light fall of snow, but every league inland gives a more genial invigorating temperature. There are very few unhealthy spots in either Central or Lower California. On the low banks and tributaries of the Bay of San Francisco, fever prevails to a great extent during the summer and fall, but elsewhere all epidemic disorders are extremely rare. The summer subsequent to our arrival in Monterey, a malignant fever attacked and carried off a number of foreigners, but this, although not severe upon the natives, was regarded as something extraordinary.

In these hunting excursions I was often attended by some friendly hunter, whose time hung heavy on his hands, but usually by the same little fellow who had been my pilot through the Carmelo mountains; his name was Juquin Luis, and by far the most intelligent, handsome boy in the place. On Sundays, with his gala dress of blue velvet trowsers, red sash, glazed hat and silver rope around it, he was quite a picture. His knowledge of all the roads, most intricate paths and passes for many leagues, was re-

markable, and at times I was almost confounded at his apparently instinctive sagacity—he knew the haunts and habits of game, was a capital shot, rode a horse like part of the animal, never daunted, never dismayed, never without an expedient, he was the most perfect child of the woods conceivable, and quite won my heart by his intelligence. He was always delighted to be my companion, for not being one of those wise children who knew their sires, his home was none of the pleasantest, for his dame was living with a cross-grained cobbler, in *relacione*, or as the youngster expressed it, she was wedded, *detras la iglesia*—behind the church—or in other words, had cheated the priest out of his marriage dues, and being, I fancied, rather given to *aguadiente*, the domestic felicity of the mansion was somewhat marred; consequently the boy was left to thrive upon his own resources. Sometimes the old lady endeavored to detain him from accompanying me, but I threatened to stop her grog, by reporting her conduct to the grave and reverend *alcalde* of the place, and thenceforth she contented herself by extorting a few rials from her child's store, at my expense.

On passing the hut on the outskirts of the town and giving a shrill whistle, out sprang Juquin, with his little black head and sparkling eyes shoved through the slit of his *serapa*, swinging the lasso in steady circles, and noosing his horse in the corral, the next moment would leap on his back, take the carbine or rifle, and off we sallied. At night we made fire, ate broiled partridges without stint, and slept under the same blanket. One of our excursions was to the river and plains of Salinas, about fifteen miles in a northerly direction, along the shores of the bay. These plains vary from ten to twenty miles in width, and extend fifty or sixty into the interior, and like the great plain of Santa Clara, have



evidently at some former period been the beds of large lakes or rivers. The Salinas is walled in by compact ridges of mountains running transversely towards the ocean, from the main Sierra Madre of California. The river is a muddy rapid stream, subjected to heavy freshets during the melting of the upland snows, and coursing close along the southern edge of the plains. On approaching the heights above the plain, I suddenly checked the reins, perfectly transfixed with surprise; for never in my life had I beheld such a magnificent vista of its kind; one broad dead level extending far as the eye could compass, like a solid brilliant sea of grass and flowers, dotted here and there by vast flocks of sheep and cattle, with the margins of the stream marked out for many a league, with fringes of drooping willows. Descending the hill, we swam the river, and after a short ride along the verge of the plain, came to the *molino*—mill—and rancho of one Bill Anderson, who, with his head powdered by flour, like a lord of the olden time, received me cordially, and being furnished with fresh horses, away we started to slaughter wild geese. They were congregated in myriads, both white and grey, feeding on the rich short grasses, and when disturbed, the noise of their wings and throats was truly deafening—they were excessively shy, and finding even buck-shot not efficacious in doing its work from a fowling-piece, I was obliged to throw single balls among the masses, from the carbine; by which method, in a few hours, we had collected a respectable horse load; they were quite fat, and resembled the tame goose with us in every particular, except the bill being much sharper and smaller. During the wet seasons, a great number of natural canals intersect these lovely plains, and are filled with swans, wild ducks, snipe and curlew, besides multitudes of quails and cranes, with now and then a large eagle to fatten on them. As night set

in, and the wolves were beginning to cry and howl melodiously after the wounded or sleeping birds, we returned to the rancho.

Our host, the afore-mentioned Bill Anderson, was a Cockney: very hospitable, very much given to the bottle, and withal a great talker and liar. His history was a simple one. Leaving England as ship-boy, he deserted and drifted about the islands of the Pacific, until at last he found himself stranded on the shores of California. Here he shortly became a man of importance, from having been summarily carried out of the country, with the Graham party, who, like our Bear friends, had rendered themselves highly obnoxious to the native population. In course of time Bill was released, and returned; established a mill on the plains, married a Californian wife, and then got drunk at his leisure and pleasure. Bill received me again most civilly, as he also did a bottle of brandy. Whether attributable to my arrival, or necessity, I did not pause to inquire, but certain it is that a bullock was slain immediately thereafter; and, I presume in compliment to the carcass, an inundation of dependents of both sexes and of all hues and colors, had dropt in to share the feast. Bill and I, with little Juquin retired to an inner apartment, which happened to be laid with a plank floor, and a good fire in the place; there was a very respectable preparation for supper, and being much too famished to mind the filth, I shut eyes, opened mouth, and ate away voraciously. Dogs soon licked the plates clean, in readiness for breakfast, probably; and in a couple of hours my thirsty host, from a too frequent application of the brandy to his parched lips, became very gloriously tipsy; and after indulging me with a full confession of many sins, and all his grievances, moreover his utterance becoming somewhat indistinct, I bade him adios, while about relating what he would observe



to the "English Secretary of State, if he only had him there,"—pointing with the bottle to his dozing sposa.

My shake-down was in a small receptacle for rubbish, fleas, and other lively furniture, which in getting at, I was obliged to pass a large room, laid out with about five-and-twenty of the servitors—men, women, and children—all in heaps. There were a number of limbs obstructing the passage, and I was obliged to push them aside, rather unceremoniously, I fear, for I was greeted by a volley of Indian guttural curses, sounding quite like a person who had swallowed a collection of shells, and was anxious to get them up more expeditiously than was possible. Being too tired and drowsy to heed their complaints, with Joaquinito I betook myself to mat and blankets, and never moved until break of day; when I arose, kicked up an Indian, and sent for fresh horses, and continued shooting geese and curlew, until the morning was far advanced; then, after swearing devoted friendship to Bill Anderson, his bullocks, and his wife, we departed for the port.

## CHAPTER XI.

WE remained two months at Monterey; and then upon the assembling of the squadron, and the arrival of a new Commodore, rather than play *segundo violò*, and have the blue pennant of a Commander-in-Chief flaunting its folds in face of our red, we were glad to lift the anchors, and sail for the waters of San Francisco. Steering too far from the land, a northerly gale arose, and although the distance is but eighty miles, we were a week in gaining our destination, on the 29th of March.

The face of the coast presents the same general aspect as that to the southward of Monterey—one great sea-wall of mountains, split into deep ravines, and tufted with towering pines. Many of these trees that fringe what Humboldt terms the maritime Alps of California, are of enormous magnitude. A German naturalist, employed in scientific pursuits in the country, assured me that he had measured pines in the Santa Cruz mountains fifty-seven feet in girth at the base, and carrying the lofty tops upon a clear shaft for two hundred and seventy feet without a branch!

I have also seen, in my Californian rambles, pines of immense growth, taking root in the wild glens of rich and sheltered mountain gorges, shooting up straight and clear as javelins, with



symmetrical columns that would make too taunt masts for the tallest "amiral" that ever floated.

Near to the mouth of San Francisco the land recedes, and passing through the narrow jaws of the Straits, which are framed in by bold, precipitous, and rocky cliffs, where violent currents are sweeping and foaming in eddying whirls around their base, you soon debouch into the outer bay. It is like a great lake, stretching away right and left, far into the heart of California. To the north another aperture, and still another, leads into the Bays of San Pablo and Soun, washing the valleys of Sinoma and Tulares, and fed by the rivers Sacramento and San Joaquin, after passing over the golden sands of the rich mines beyond. To the southward the waters are not so extended, and the bay laves the garden of California in the beautiful vale of Santa Clara. Green islands adorn the bosom of these vast estuaries, and everywhere are found safe and commodious harbors.

Our anchorage was near the little village of Yerbabuena, five miles from the ocean, and within a short distance from the Franciscan Mission and Presidio of the old royalists. The site seems badly chosen, for although it reposes in partial shelter, beneath the high bluffs of the coast, yet a great portion of the year it is enveloped in chilling fogs; and invariably, during the afternoon, strong sea breezes are drawn through the straits like a funnel, and playing with fitful violence around the hills, the sand is swept in blinding clouds over the town and the adjacent shores of the bay. Yet with all these drawbacks the place was rapidly thriving under the indomitable energy of our countrymen. Tenements, large and small, were running up, like card-built houses, in all directions. The population was composed of Mormons, backwoodsmen, and a few very respectable traders from the

eastern cities of the United States. Very rare it was to see a native: our brethren had played the porcupine so sharply as to oblige them to seek their homes among more congenial kindred. On Sunday, however, it was not uncommon to encounter gay cavalcades of young paisanos, jingling in silver chains and finery, dashing into town, half-a-dozen abreast; having left their sweethearts at the Mission, or some neighboring rancho, for the evening fandango. Towards afternoon, when these frolicsome *caballeros* became a trifle elevated with their potations, they were wont to indulge in a variety of capricious feats on horseback—leaping and wheeling—throwing the lasso over each other;—or if by chance a bullock appeared, they took delight while at full speed in the *carrara*, in catching the beasts by a dextrous twist in the tail; and the performance was never satisfactorily concluded until the bullock was thrown a complete summerset over his horns. These paisanos of California, like the guachos of Buenos Ayres, and guaso of Chili, pass most of their existence on horseback; there the natural vigor of manhood seems all at once called into play, and horse and backer appear of the same piece. The lasso is their plaything, either for service or pastime; with it, the unruly wild horse, or bullock, is brought within reach of the knife. Ferocious Bruin himself gets his throat twisted and choked, and with heavy paws spread wide apart, is dragged for miles, perhaps to the bear-bait, notwithstanding his glittering jaws, and giant efforts to escape. Without the horse and lasso, these gentry are helpless as infants; their horses are admirably trained, and sometimes perform under a skilful hand pranks that always cause surprise to strangers. I once saw a band of horses, at General Rosa's quinta, near Buenos Ayres, trained to run like hares, with fore and hind legs lashed together by thongs of hide;



it was undertaken to preserve the animals from being thrown by the Indian bolas, and the riders, as a consequence, lanced to death. But I was far more amused one afternoon while passing a fandango, near Monterey, to see a drunken *vaquero*—cattle-driver—mounted on a restive, plunging beast, hold at arms length a tray of glasses, brimming with aguadiente, which he politely offered to everybody within reach of his curvettings, without ever once spilling a drop. I thought this better than Camille Leroux, in the polka, or a guacho picking up a cigarrito with his teeth, at a hand gallop! It is remarkable, too, how very long the Californian can urge a horse, and how lightly he rides, even when the beast appears thoroughly exhausted, tottering at every pace under a strange rider; yet the native will lift him to renewed struggles, and hold him up for leagues further. Nor is it by the aid of his enormous spurs, for the punishment is by no means so severe as the sharp rowels with us; but accustomed to the horse from infancy, he appears to divine his powers, and thus a mutual and instinctive bond is established between them. The saddles here, as well as those along the southern coasts, partake in build of the old Spanish high peak and croupe, and are really intended for ease and comfort to the rider. In Chili the pillion is used—a soft material of rugs, smooth and thick, thrown over the saddle frame; but it distends the thighs too greatly. The Californian is both hard and heavy, and murderous to the horse. The Mexican is best,—less cumbersome, more elegant in construction, and a great support to the rider. The stirrups of all are similar—weighty wooden structures—and the feet rest naturally in them.

There is nothing either pleasing or inviting in the landscape in the vicinity of Yerbabuena. All looks bare and sterile from a

distance, and on closer inspection, the deep sandy soil is covered with impervious thickets of low thorny undergrowth, with none of the rich green herbage, forests or timber as in Monterey. The roads were so heavy that the horses could hardly strain, nearly knee deep, through the sand, and consequently, our rides were restricted to a league's *pasear* to the mission, or across the narrow strip of the peninsular to the old presidio; but in the town we passed the hours pleasantly, became conversant with the Mormon bible and doctrine, rolled ten-pins, and amused ourselves nightly, at the monte in the *casa de bebida de Brown*; still there was a great stir and bustle going on. A number of large merchant ships had arrived, bringing the regiment of New York volunteers, and the beach was strewn with heavy guns, carriages, piles of shot, ordnance stores, wagons, tents and camp equipage, whilst the streets were filled with troops, who belonged to the true democracy, called one another mister, snubbed their officers, and did generally as they pleased, which was literally nothing. However, in due time, they were brought into the traces, and properly buckled to their duty, when their services were exerted in planting a battery of long 24-pounders, to command the straits, and their excitable spirits kept under control at their quarters in the presidio.

This was Yerbabuena as we found it on our first coming—rapidly springing into importance, and bidding fair at some future day, even without the advantages to be derived from the mines which were then unknown, to become the greatest commercial port on the Pacific.

Previous to our arrival in the waters of Francisco, a frightful incident transpired amidst the Californian mountains, which goes far to surpass any event of the kind heard or seen, from the black



hole of Calcutta, to smoking the Arabs in Algeria. It relates to a party of emigrants, whose shocking inhuman cannibalisms and sufferings exceeded all belief. The news first reached us in Monterey, and also that a party had been despatched to succor them. From an officer of the navy in charge of the expedition, and from one of the survivors, a Spanish boy, named Baptiste, I learned the following particulars: The number of emigrants were originally eighty; through a culpable combination of ignorance and folly, they loitered many weeks on the route, when, upon gaining the sierra, the snows set in, the trails became blocked up and impassable, and they were obliged to encamp for the winter; their provisions were shortly exhausted, their cattle were devoured to the last horse's hide, hunger came upon them, want and terrible, starvation at last—men, women and children starved to death, and were eaten by their fellows—insanity followed. When relief arrived, the survivors were found rolling in filth, parents eating their own offspring, denizens of different cabins exchanging limbs and meat—little children tearing and devouring the livers and hearts of the dead, and a general apathy and mania pervaded all alike, so as to make them scout the idea of leaving their property in the mountains before the spring, even to save their miserable lives; and on separating those who were able to bear the fatigue of travelling, the cursings and ravings of the remainder were monstrous. One Dutchman actually ate a full-grown body in thirty-six hours! another boiled and devoured a girl nine years old, in a single night. The women held on to life with greater tenacity than the men—in fact, the first intelligence was brought to Sutter's fort, on the Sacramento, by two young girls. One of them feasted on her good papa, but on making soup of her lover's head, she confessed to some inward qualms of conscience. The

young Spaniard, Baptiste, was hero of the party, performing all labor and drudgery in getting fuel and water, until his strength became exhausted; he told me that he ate Jake Donner and the baby, "eat baby raw, stewed some of Jake, and roasted his head, not good meat, taste like sheep with the rot; but, sir, very hungry, eat anything,"—these were his very words. There were thirty survivors, and a number of them without feet, either frozen or burnt off, who were placed under the care of our surgeons on shore. Although nothing has ever happened more truly dreadful, and in many respects ludicrously so, yet what was surprising, the emigrants themselves perceived nothing very extraordinary in all these cannibalisms, but seemed to regard it as an every day occurrence—surely they were deranged. The party who went to their relief deserved all praise, for they, too, endured every hardship, and many were badly frostbitten. The cause of all this suffering was mainly attributable to the unmeaning delay and indolence attending their early progress on the route, but with every advantage in favor of emigration, the journey in itself must be attended with immense privation and toil. The mere fact, that by the upper route there is one vast desert to be travelled over, many hundred miles in width, affording very little vegetation or sustenance, and to crown the difficulty, terminated by the rugged chain of Californian mountains, is almost sufficient in itself to deter many a good man and strong, from exposing his life and property, for an unknown home on the shores of the Pacific.