

to me to quaff. The drove of horses was soon brought up, and as a particular favor, the patrona selected her own nag to bear me—a small mare and natural pacer that rattled along at a great rate without whip or spur—embracing the party, we again mounted and started off in fine style. The country has the same lovely aspect as in the vicinity of San José; great level plains teeming in wild grain, and wide-spreading foliage of oaks, chesnuts, maple and willows, enclosed between high-swelling hills. In fact the country for more than forty leagues of this broad valley is so perfectly level that a coach could be driven in any direction without serious obstruction; however, there is one annoyance to which horses are subjected, in the multitudes of holes burroughed by a species of ground squirrels, very frequently bringing horse and rider to their faces. A few leagues rapid travelling brought us in sight of the southern arm of the waters of San Francisco, and skirting along its shores, by sunset we had left the low country, traversed the rugged hills of the sea-girt peninsular, floundered knee deep in the sandy road, and by nightfall I found myself comfortably housed with a generous batchelor friend, Mr. Frank Ward, in Yerbabuena.

CHAPTER XVII.

REMAINING but a few days in Yerbabuena, and when on the point of taking leave, I met with a brace of navy men, who were about to sail up the Bay for a hunt among the hills; so giving orders to the brave courier to join me at Puebla, I embarked with my friends one day at noon in a small launch, and a stiff sea-breeze soon wafted us forty miles; then entering a narrow creek, formed by high sedgy reeds that sprang from the shallow water, we performed a tortuous serpentine track, in a labyrinth that fairly required Ariadne's clue to thread its mazy windings, actually sailing sixteen miles to gain three, as the bird flies; at last we arrived at the *embarcadera* of San José, and after a fatiguing walk, at dark we came upon a tenement. The house was filled with women and dogs, who chattered and cheated, dinned and dunned us to such a pitch that we were obliged to seek shelter elsewhere; and accordingly we *packed* our saddles, blankets and rifles, and at about nine o'clock reached the estate of one Don Ignacio de Sylva. Our host received us with open arms, prepared a supper of beef and *tortillas*, and in return, we complimented him with strong rummers of punch; his fat spouse joined in the festivities, and when the evening was somewhat advanced, a shake-down was arranged for us on the floor of the *sala*, which, fortunately for fleas and ourselves, chanced to be laid with a floor of boards. My

slumbers were greatly disturbed by being placed in full view of a pretty young brunette, whose light from an adjoining apartment threw her form in most distinct rays of animated beauty, amusing herself the while playing with a baby, whilst her filthy villain of a husband regaled himself for an hour or more with a *cigarrito*. My dreams were none of the pleasantest, and I was glad when day dawned to light me out of the dwelling, and breathe the pure morning air. *Como les gusta á los Americanos el fresco*, said our lazy host, as he sat wrapped in a blanket on a hide, observing me take a bath in a little rivulet near by; *se hace daño*—be the death of him—as he blew the cigar smoke from his lungs with a deep sigh! Notwithstanding his indolence we found him a most consummate extortioner, and after throwing every impediment in our way, he hired us miserable horses at an extravagant rate; and then mounting, we took the road over a dry, salt, marshy country. Passing the mission of St. Josephs, we never halted until reaching Puebla, where we were most kindly welcomed by Mr. Ruckle. The town is planted in the midst of the great plain, with small streams of water, which is much needed elsewhere, coursing on either side. The place contained some five hundred inhabitants, the dwellings all of the adobie mud-built order of architecture, with but one road between them: for ten leagues around the land is most fertile, and the country in many respects appears to possess great advantages, and has the reputation of being the garden of Upper California. We saw quantities of fruits, peas, peaches, and grapes, very unripe, but the natives like them the better green.

Under no contingency does the natural face of Upper California appear susceptible of supporting a very large population; the country is hilly and mountainous; great dryness prevails during

the summers, and occasionally excessive droughts parch up the soil for periods of twelve or eighteen months. Only in the plains and valleys where streams are to be found, and even those will have to be watered by artificial irrigation, does there seem the hope of being sufficient tillable land to repay the husbandman and afford subsistence to the inhabitants. Sheep and cattle may be raised to any extent; as the gentle slopes, clothed in rich wild grasses, afford excellent districts for grazing.

We breakfasted at the residence of a plain, sensible and industrious family of emigrants from Virginia, named Campbell; then strolling to the banks of a little rivulet, we took siesta beneath the shade of drooping willows, surrounded by groups of brunettas washing in the pools near by. In the afternoon my fellow travelers left me for their hunt among the mountains; and upon learning that Commodore Stockton was in the village, I immediately made my homage. He was by long odds the most popular person in California, and by his enthusiasm, energy, and determination, accomplished more, even with the limited means at his command, in the acquisition of this valuable territory, than any other man before or since, who has planted his foot on the soil.

The following day was Sunday, the Fourth of July, and moreover the fast day of the Patron Saint of California—*Nuestra Señora del Refugio*. Meeting Miss Ellen Murphy and brother on the road bound to high mass at the mission, I agreed to accompany them and return to their rancho in the evening. There was a large assemblage in Santa Clara, and we attended church. The building was oblong, painted roughly in fresco, and decorated with a number of coarse paintings, and lots of swallow-tailed, green and yellow satin pennants dangling from the ceiling. During service an indefatigable cannonier, outside, gave frequent *feux de*

joie, from a graduated scale of diminutive culverins—made of brass in shape of pewter porter pots, half filled with powder, and the charge rammed down with pounded bricks—this with music of kettle-drums, cymbals and fiddles made a very respectable din; there were two gentlemanly priests of the order of Saint Francisco, whose acquaintance I afterwards made, who preached each a brief sermon with eloquence and force. Among the congregation were all the belles and dandies of the valley; the former kneeled demurely on little rugs or bits of carpet in the nave of the church; but the latter were lounging near the doors—their gala costume is quite in keeping with Andalusia—and one handsome fellow at my side took my eye, as I have no doubt he did that of many a brighter. He was dressed in a close-fitting blue cloth jacket; sky-blue velvet trowsers, slashed from the thigh down, and jingling with small filagree silver buttons; snow-white laced *calçoncillos*, terminated by nicely stamped and embroidered *botas*; around the waist was passed a heavy crimson silk sash; a gay woollen serapa hung gracefully over the shoulder; in one hand a sugar-loafed, glazed sombrero, bound with thick silver cords; and in the other, silver spurs of an enormous size, each spike of the rowels two inches long: all these bright colors—set off by dark, brilliant eyes, jetty black locks, and pliant figure—would have made him irresistible anywhere. Turning towards me, he asked, smilingly, *Porque no se arrodilla vd en Misa?*—Why don't you kneel at the Mass?—*Tengo pierna de palo*, quoth I, quite gravely: glancing at my pins with much interest, to discover if they were of timber, he seemed to relish the joke, and we then s'lded out of the church, and became firm friends on the spot.

After service, I was introduced to many American emigrants, mostly Mormons, who, in a free and easy style, had taken posses-

sion of the outbuildings and tenements belonging to the Mission; and who, in their contempt for the kind and good Padres, and rightful proprietors of the domain, were not only averse to request permission to remain for a season, but were hugely indignant at the military Governor of California, Colonel Mason, for having issued a decree, requiring these lazy gentlemen to leave the lands of the Church. Notwithstanding their mutterings, a few weeks later they were summarily forced out by the bayonet.

Whilst we were at mass, a serious mishap occurred to young Murphy. A juvenile damsel, whose cognomen was "sugar-plumb," and being the only eligible maiden for matrimony, I was assured by a hospitable dame, one Mrs. Bennett, "that she was the forwardest gall in the Mission," through some silly, childish freak, frightened my friend's horse, so that the restive animal broke the halter, and made long strides over the plain. A couple of drunken Indians started in pursuit, but having a quarrel on the way, one plunged his cuchillo up to the haft in his companion's thigh, which brought him, deluged in blood, from the saddle. We found this poor devil and conveyed him to town; but of the runaway horse and saddle, which was worth half-a-dozen Indian lives, or horses, we could learn nor see nothing. We made but a short stay in Puebla, and an hour before the sun sank for the day, we put foot in stirrup, and a long swinging gallop of seven leagues soon carried us to good Mr. Murphy, and a good supper.

The following morning I arose with the lark, took a long pull at the milk-pail, volunteered a little surgical advice to an Indian *vacuero*, who being thrown from his horse, was suffering under a badly-contused thigh; he had bound the limb tightly with strands of hide, and was doing a new principle of local bleeding by

puncturing the flesh with sharp stones—a mode of treatment very much in vogue with the natives. Under guidance of Dan, we mounted capital horses, and sallied out for a bear-hunt. Entering a gentle rise of the hill sides to the southward, we wound around the grain-covered slopes for two hours, seeing but a few stray deer, and a herd of wild horses; and although the traces of Bruin were everywhere visible, we were on the point of turning our steps homeward, when my companion grasped me by the shoulder, pulled me back to the horse's flanks, and whispered, "Thar's one! lie low, Captin! lie low!" It was a large he bear, walking about a little bowl of a valley below us, in the laziest, hoggish manner possible, going from side to side, rooting and tearing up the earth by wagon loads, in his search for ground-rats—his course being directly towards us. We dismounted, hitched horses to the lower branches of an oak, a few yards in our rear, divested ourselves of all but knives and rifles, taking the precaution to keep a bullet in our mouths, that they might slip easily down the guns in case of emergency, then crossing to the edge of the hill, we awaited the grizzly. He came nearly within point-blank range, when changing his track, he passed over to the other side of the slope. We tightened girths, mounted again, and rode around to head him off; when going through the same operations as before, we ensconced ourselves behind a giant tree, and remained perfectly silent; presently the monster entered a knoll of bushes, within forty yards of us. "Captin," said Dan, with his mouth close to my ear, "when I whistle, plug him in the head." I brought my rifle down, but at the moment of springing the trigger, I must confess feeling some inward quakings, from all I had heard of their ferocity when wounded, and accordingly I intimated a request to Dan that he would open the ball.

Giving a low whistle, to attract Bruin's attention, the long barrel rested motionless for a second against the tree, and as the beast raised his head to listen, Dan let the hammer fall. *Maldito!* the cap only exploded; but it startled Bruin, who leaped from the shrubbery, and took to his heels. My turn came, and I sent him a bullet out of twenty to the pound; wheeling on his haunches, he showed a range of glittering jaws, and not seeing us, made off again. We once more got in the saddle, and rushed in pursuit. Dan had another glimpse—snapped again—I took a long range, and blazed away. Nothing done. On we galloped up the hills, and skirting around the summits, we began slowly to descend along the brow of a ravine, in which we anticipated finding the chase. We had nearly reached the base without perceiving him, when Dan, who was behind, shouted, "Mind your eye, Captin!" I heard a sharp, rattling growl, and within thirty feet below me was Bruin, licking a stream of blood flowing from his rump. He raised up, snarling with rage, with huge paws and claws distended; and when about making for me I fired right between the shoulders, and heard the lead strike *chug*. The moment after my horse plunged, took the bit in his teeth, and dashed across the valley. After getting him again under control, we tracked the bear over the crest of the hill to a small dense thicket, where we heard him groaning, and angrily snapping his jaws. Dan swore it would be "rank pison" to venture after him, and we both thought him hit too hard to crawl out alive. I was extremely disappointed in not beholding the last of him, but Dan consoled me by promising to pay him a visit with the dogs the following day; which he did, but the beast was half devoured by coyotes and gallinazos, so that it was impossible to save the skin. It was of a verity the most formidable beast I ever saw outside the bars

of a cage: covered with long grizzly hair, dark upon the spine, and inclining to a yellowish tinge along the shoulders. He must have weighed fourteen hundred pounds.

At noon, my escort and cavallada having come up, and all ready for the road, fully appreciating the honest kindness of the Murphys, I threw myself in the saddle, and departed for Monterey. We had but four horses—miserable beasts they were—one gave up the ghost before the spur had made a hole in his hide, and another was brutally murdered by my illustrious soldier, who being unable, in his stupidity, to noose him, brought the poor animal lifeless to the ground with two ounces of buck-shot from the musket. Apart from these annoyances, we had the utmost difficulty in urging those we rode into the settlement of San Juan. On the road I was favored by a specimen of native rusticity. A youthful *vacuero* accosted me, and walked his cavallo at my side; familiarly placing his hand on the barrel of my rifle, he frankly opened a discourse by asking if I had any tobacco; not fancying his impertinence, and thinking I detected a mischievous expression in his visage, I quickly replied, with my rifle at half-cock, *No tengo*. *Que tienes pues?* he added, with a sneer. *Dinero*, I responded, chinking the coin in my pocket, upon which he made a jocose grasp at that receptacle of my treasure, whereupon the solid tube of the rifle came in forcible contact with his nose, with such a violent collision that the claret spirted over the mane of his steed. He reined quickly back—the water standing in his eyes—made a demonstration of taking a whirl at me with his lasso, but observing the dark hole of my rifle staring him in the face, he contented himself by yelling *puñetero!* and galloped away.

I found St. Johns a detestable spot—half a score dwellings—

the church, and long ranges of buildings of the Mission, more than half in ruins, and rapidly crumbling to the ground. Thirty years before, this abode of the Frayles possessed twenty thousand head of horses, three times that number of horned cattle, and a thousand Indian serfs to till their broad acres. Meeting the intelligent priests who had officiated in Santa Clara, they directed me to a house where a lodging was procurable. Crossing the deserted plaza, I entered a large ill-constructed adobie dwelling, where I was received by a filthy young Gascon, who appeared to be mayor domo, in the midst of a houseful of girls and women. I lost no time in doing the amiable to my agreeable hostesses, who in turn prepared a supper of dirty junks of beef, and still worse *tortillas*. *Bifstek à la god dem*—fingers before forks—*comme l'usage en Californie*, said the Frenchman, as he vigorously commenced operations. But the supper was so unpalatable and unclean a meal, that hungry as I was, I fain amused myself the while, puffing cigarillos, catching fleas, and drinking execrably sour country wine. The feast was barely ended, when a loud screeching, and violent commotion among the women attracted attention; and presently there came running towards me an old beldame with, *Dios de mi alma, es rd medico?*—the Lord preserve us, are you a doctor. *Si! si! amiga! Medico y cirujano bueno*—Yes, Jack of all trades—I replied, deeming it a fair chance of exhibiting a little irresponsible empirical practice. Upon inquiring the necessity for my professional abilities being called into play, I learned that the entire household had been exerting themselves the day and night previous dancing at a fandango, and that one of the *jovencitas* was attacked with fits, consequent upon her exertions. The poor girl was lying on the

the tiled floor, her head propped up by pillows, with loose dishevelled dress, and rich masses of dark hair strewn over her bosom and shoulders, like serpents in Eden. She was moaning piteously between the convulsions, and one old Hecate was striving to pry her mouth open with an iron spoon, whilst another was slapping her hands and yelling all the while, *Crescencia! Crescencia!* Kneeling beside the pretty suffering patient, and finding her pulse throbbing like a steam-engine, in my ignorance I advised bleeding; but this was out of the question, as nothing sharper than a hatchet, jack-knife, or old steel-pen, was to be had in the place; consequently, all left to be done was the application of hot vinegar and blankets. While superintending this process, and bathing her forehead, she went off again into spasms, clasped her arms around me, and for the space of five minutes I was favored with a succession of the warmest embraces; and, although it may not be generally credited, yet I'll venture to assert, that one may be seldom placed in a more trying situation, even if a charming girl has fits. *Crescencia* became calmer after this trifling ebullition, and was put to bed. I was anxious to sit up with the party during the night, but the *vieja* declined my services, and I retired to another dormitory, where I slept tolerably well on a table, wrapped in a blanket, with holsters for pillow. Arising at daybreak, I was concerned to find my horses had disappeared from the corral, which I had reason to attribute to the kind offices of the Gascon. However, I paid him a dollar to have them caught, and upon bidding adios I gave him a *souvenir* from the thick lash of my riding-whip, which was no doubt serviceable to other travellers who have succeeded me.

We reached the Salinas Plains at noon; half way across

my horse dropped with me into a ditch, so I scrambled out, packed saddle and duds on my own back, gained the molino, procured a Spanish brute from the proprietor thereof, and the same night arrived in Monterey. I regret to add, this was my last interview with Anderson—he was assassinated a few months later, by a person named Callagan.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE latter part of July found the frigate again moored off Yerbabuena, in the waters of San Francisco. A number of us had long anticipated the pleasure of a trip to the northward; and a fine prize schooner, the Julia, being unemployed, she was accordingly made ready, and, early one morning, our party, with a few trifling kits, were all snugly stowed away on board. With the broad pennant fluttering at the main, and all sails spread, we soon lost sight of the anchorage. The Julia's cabin had four berths sufficiently capacious for grown people, and two others, which were, in reality, intended for minors, or any adult under three feet in length; a settee ran crosswise, and the intermediate space filled in with a cozy table. Our mess amounted to seven, and the caterer had been careful to provide servants and cooks, cold hams and tongues, potted oysters and biscuits, silver-topped bottles of ale and stout, cases of pale sherry, bundles of havannas, and what with a haunch or two of venison, and lots of edibles, indiscriminately packed in huge baskets, we counted upon a sufficiency of *viveres* to allay thirst and famine for a week to come. Indeed, there's nothing answers so well as a profusion of "provender," to promote good humor and agreeable conversation. Major Dalgetty understood this practically and philosophically. Guitars, pretty spirituelle women, babbling brooks and shady lawns, with a bowl

of chicken salad, do very well when one goes a picknicking in an omnibus, or canal boat; but when it is necessary to rough it a bit in open air and unknown regions, we require something more substantial.

Passing through the inner straits, above Angel Island, we entered the bay of San Pablo, or Sinoma, and, with a pleasant breeze, steered for the upper shores. It is a vast, circular sheet of water, twelve miles in diameter, fenced in from the ocean, on one side, by a rim of broken hills, closely abutting upon the bay; while to the north and east, the land trends easily away, in less abrupt elevations, into the interior, leaving a base of wide, fertile plains and valleys, verging upon the shores.

A noble ship channel takes the direction of the eastern coast, leading into the straits of Carquinez, an opening quite similar to the outer passage from the sea. Our course lay in an opposite point, and, turning to the left, we sailed over shallower depths, until late in the afternoon, when, finding there was no water to spare betwixt the keel and the bottom, we dropt anchor, two miles from the land. The barge was presently manned, and leaving our butler, Mr. Bill Moulden, to exercise his care and corkscrew over the comestibles, we rowed to the entrance of a creek, where, after winding about in the serpentine tracks of an inlet for, at the least, ten miles, we at last jumped on shore at the *embarcadera* of Sinoma. The gentleman to whom we were bound, not being apprised of our coming, but two horses were to be procured, and the rest of us trudged along on foot. The road was perfectly level, walking good, and, with sparkling stars for lanterns, in an hour we found ourselves at the residence of General Vallejo, were ushered through a spacious *porte cocher*, into a large *sala*, and graciously received by the lady of the mansion, whose hus-

band chanced to be absent on important business. It may be as well to state here, that Vallejo had been the most important personage in Upper California, both from family influence, intelligence and wealth. On the commencement of the war, notwithstanding the annoyance he had experienced from the Bear party, he espoused the cause of the United States; and, being blessed with a clear head and much discernment, saw at a glance the benefit derivable for California by a connection with a staunch Republic, in preference to letting the territory languish under the misrule of Mexico, or, perhaps, at some future period, to maintain the needy soldiery of a foreign monarchy. I believe myself within the mark, in estimating the General's landed property at one hundred square leagues, embracing much of the best agricultural and grazing districts in the country, with many of the most eligible sites for commercial ports on the waters of San Francisco. The little Pueblo of Sinoma stands with its back resting against a ridge of high hills, shutting in, on one side, a lovely plain, near fifty miles in extent, and presenting much the same pleasing aspect of golden lakes of wild oats and luxuriant oaks, as grace the vale of Santa Clara. The principal dwellings and barracks form three sections of a square—all, except one edifice, owned and occupied by the relations and family of our absent host. His residence was the largest—as usual, built of adobies—two hundred feet long, of two stories, having a tier of balconies above. The apartments we occupied below were well furnished, walls papered, books and cases, prints and mirrors in profusion. We were somewhat surprised, not believing so much refinement, in that which is termed modern civilization, existed in the territory. The Señora herself, assisted by a well-behaved youth, did the honors of the supper table; and after we had made a hearty meal, she retired

and left us to the enjoyment of chateau margaux and cigars. During supper we were complimented by a serenade, sung by a number of Russians and Germans, whose harmonious chorus, and songs of "Faderland," almost carried us away to the Rhine. We sought the music room, shortly after, where the little daughters of our entertainers were performing on the piano. They had been properly instructed, and performed remarkably well; besides, they were pretty, becomingly attired, and, what is still more commendable, exceedingly well bred. Towards midnight we said *buenas noches*, and sought our beds, where, if we had been previously a little astonished to find ourselves surrounded with elegance, we soon had reason to return to realities, by the aid of the pincer-like stings of the curse of the country, *pulgas*, who, finding us tender and palatable, hopped about us for the remainder of the night. To evade their sharp bites, I tried to smoke myself insensible, and would no doubt have succeeded in deluding myself into slumber, had not my repose been again interrupted by a loud altercation between the Admiral's aid-de-camp and Captain Swayback, of the dragoons, who chanced to be billeted together. The former, through abstraction, had swathed himself, like to an Egyptian mummy, in all the clothes, and persisted in occupying the centre of the bed; moreover, hinting a disinclination to pass the night with any gentleman perfumed with tobacco. Upon this, the captain became jocosely indignant; and although admitting that, in his varied hardships and travels, he had been necessitated to bivouac many a time under worse auspices, yet he still had a mortal antipathy to share his pillow with a man; so, he betook himself to the floor, where, with blanket, an inverted chair for pillow, and a brilliant cigar illumining either corner of his mouth, he rendered the room dense with smoke until daylight.

Early on the morrow we took a pleasant ramble about the village, and were individually hugged by a tame grizzly cub, who was altogether more ardent in his affectionate embraces than our recent acquaintance required—thence to breakfast on the accustomed *olla podrida*, which is a stereotyped mess everywhere with Spaniards and their descendants—though at times differently prepared—here it was flanked by *frijoles*. The meal finished, horses were standing, ready caparisoned, at the door, and whilst my friends amused themselves to their fancy, I seized a rifle, and in company with a young American, started on a hunt. We had ridden a league over the valley, when we perceived a small herd of antelopes; but they desisted us, too, a long way off, and not without much trouble and hard riding, did I succeed in striking one with a bullet, flying, as I may say; for never before had I beheld such nimble heels. Another was wounded, also, but, with his companions, reached the highlands and escaped. The first had his fore leg nearly severed from his shoulder, but, notwithstanding it traversed around in his flight like a wheel, he still ran good four leagues before we approached near enough to kill him. We soon packed the meat on a horse, which is done by removing the entrails, breaking the back bone, and doubling the animal, horns and tail; then it is secured to the saddle. Two may be carried this way; but wo to the hunter, if the sharp, hard hoofs happen to prick his horse, the probability being that the rider will describe a summerset. Highly pleased with the exploit, we sent our prize to the *embarcadera*. The antelope abounds in great numbers in the vicinity of Sinoma. They pass more evenly over the ground than deer; are far swifter, and extremely shy. We all reassembled at the Puebla in good time and condition for dinner, which passed pleasantly, and then taking leave of

our handsome, hospitable hostess, who expressed much regret at the absence of Don Guadalupe, her husband, we mounted fresh horses and turned our backs on the little village of Sinoma, all highly pleased with the visit. Embarking again at the head of the creek, with a strong favoring tide, we reached our floating domicile at dark. Fatigue of the day made heavy eyelids, and supper was barely despatched, before sleep shrouded us in the land of dreams.

Weighing at sunrise the next day, with light winds, and charming weather, we bore away to the Carquinez Straits. This passage lies on the eastern face of San Pablo; it may be a mile and a half wide, and we found a broad ship channel, ranging from twelve to five fathoms soundings, all the way to the head of the straits, where we anchored the Julia, in twenty-five feet water, within a bound of the bank. Our position was at the site of an embryo city, called Benecia. The selection was made by Doctor Semple, and the land owned by Vallejo, in compliment to whose wife the place was named. In point of natural advantages, I know of no more eligible situation: the country rises in gentle sweeping undulations for some miles, terminating quite around by a lofty amphitheatre of hills; the climate is equable and salubrious, with a rich and fertile soil, and plenty of timber, and it is said coal of a superior quality exists in the vicinity. At the time of our visit a mania was raging in California about lands, and lots, and although nothing had been attempted in Benecia, except a very pretty plan on paper, and three miserable little board sheds, with a flat boat to ferry travellers across the straits; yet from being the highest navigable point, where large vessels can conveniently discharge or load from the main rivers of the San Francisco, that pour into the shoal Bay of Sossun, we

predicted that eventually Yerbabuena might play a relative Sandy Hook to a New York; *then*, nothing was known of the El Dorado fifty miles above: had we been aware of it we might have taken the little city off the Doctor's hands; for now, with its manifest advantages, and enormous influx of emigration flowing towards California, there can be no bounds placed upon its progress.

We made a hunting trio during the day, crossed to the opposite shore, but not being acquainted with the haunts of game, and being a little timid about the prospect of meeting a grizzly, we did not venture into the interior; and after a long and arduous tramp over the steep spurs of heights that entrenched boldly upon the straits, we saw no opportunity for firing our rifles, being only repaid by a treat of delicious melons found at an isolated rancho.

At nine the following morning we bid adieu to Benecia, with the credit of having been the largest vessel, and only one of war, that had ever floated so far on the broad bosom of San Francisco. With this plume in our castors we were obliged to be content, as the Admiral could not spare time to explore further. With an ebb tide, and prevalent west wind, we tacked boldly from side to side; before noon had cleared the straits, and entering a narrow channel that borders on the Tulares Valley, we ran between Mares Island and the main, and again came to anchor. Here we tarried all day, in hopes of filling the Julia with elk; but although the low banks and extensive fields of reeds are famed as the resort of immense bands, yet, for a wonder, there was not a four-legged animal to be seen. Fowling-pieces, however, came into requisition, and we filled our bags with mallard, curlew, and plover; these tit bits came in seasonably, for the antelope, which

by the way proved most excellent, was literally on his last leg. When the ebb tide again made, at night, we lifted the anchor once more, homeward bound, and the next afternoon were again comfortably kicking heels under the mess mahogany of the frigate.