unfortunate emigrants, and the horrid and revolting extremities to which some of them were reduced to sustain life, from the "California Star" of April 10th, 1847:—

"A more shocking scene cannot be imagined, than that witnessed by the party of men who went to the relief of the unfortunate emigrants in the California mountains. The bones of those who had died and been devoured by the miserable ones that still survived, were lying around their tents and cabins. Bodies of men, women, and children, with half the flesh torn from them, lay on every side. A woman sat by the side of the body of her husband, who had just died, cutting out his tongue; the heart she had already taken out, broiled, and ate! The daughter was seen eating the flesh of the father—the mother that of her children—children that of father and mother. The emaciated, wild, and ghastly appearance of the survivors added to the horror of the scene. Language cannot describe the awful change that a few weeks of dire suffering had wrought in the minds of these wretched and pitiable beings. Those who but one month before would have shuddered and sickened at the thought of eating human flesh, or of killing their companions and relatives to preserve their own lives, now looked upon the opportunity these acts afforded them of escaping the most dreadful of deaths, as a providential interference in their behalf. Calculations were coldly made, as they sat around their gloomy camp-fires, for the next and succeeding meals. Various expedients were devised to prevent the dreadful crime of murder, but they finally resolved to kill those who had the least claims to longer existence. Just at this moment, however, as if by Divine interposition, some of them died, which afforded the rest temporary relief. Some sunk into the arms of death cursing God for their miserable fate, while the last whisperings of others were prayers and songs of praise to the Almighty.

"After the first few deaths, but the one all-absorbing thought of individual self-preservation prevailed. The fountains of natural affection were dried up. The cords that once vibrated with connubial, parental, and filial affection, were rent asunder, and each one seemed resolved, without regard to the fate of others, to escape from the impending calamity. Even the wild, hostile mountain Indians, who once visited their camps, pitied them, and instead of pursuing the natural impulse of their hostile feelings to the whites, and destroying them, as they could easily have done, divided their own scanty supply of food with them.

"So changed had the emigrants become, that when the party sent out arrived with food, some of them cast it aside, and seemed to prefer the putrid human flesh that still remained. The day before the party arrived, one of the emigrants took a child of about four years of age in bed with him, and devoured the whole before morning; and the next day ate another about the same age before noon."

CHAPTER XXI.

California Indians—Captain Sutter—Difficulties in making his first settlement in California—Laboring Indians—Propensity for gambling—Captain Sutter's coin—Account of their games—Food of the Indians—Captain Sutter's wheat crops in 1846—Scarcity of flouring-mills—Water-power—Hemp—Dine with Captain Sutter; description of the dinner—Oppressive impost-duties of the Mexican government—Indian rancherias—Indian orgies—Sacramento river—Salmon—New Helvetia—Indian sweat-house—Reported Indian invasion by the Walla-Wallas—Description of the Walla-Wallas

Sept. 3.—We remained encamped near Sutter's Fort, or Fort Sacramento, as subsequently it has been named. This morning we were visited by numerous Indians from the neighboring *rancherias*, who brought with them watermelons, muskmelons, and strings of pan-fish, taken from a small pond about half a mile distant, with a sort of hand-trap. The Indians wade into the pond with their traps in hand, and take with them the fish, sometimes by dozens at a haul. These they wished to trade for such small articles as we possessed, and the cast-off clothing of the members of our party. Some of these Indians were

partially clothed, others were entirely naked, and a portion of them spoke the Spanish language. They exhibited considerable sharpness in making a bargain, holding their wares at a high valuation, and although their desire to trade appeared to be strong, they would make no sacrifices to obtain the articles offered in exchange for them. But such was the desire of our men to obtain vegetables, of which they had been for so long a time deprived, that there was scarcely any article which they possessed, which they would refuse to barter for them.

The Indians generally are well made and of good stature, varying from five feet four inches to five feet ten and eleven inches in height, with strong muscular developments. Their hair is long, black, and coarse, and their skin is a shade lighter than that of a mulatto. They appear to be indolent and averse from labor of every kind, unless combined with their sports and amusements, when they are as reckless of fatigue and danger as any class of men I have seen.

By invitation of Captain Sutter, addressed to myself and Mr. Jacob, we visited and dined at the fort. The fort is situated near the confluence of the Rio de los Americanos and the Rio Sacramento. The valley of the Sacramento is here of great width, and consequently the fort is surrounded by an extensive plain, bounded by distant mountains on the east and on the west. This plain exhibits every evidence of a most fertile soil. The grasses, although they are now brown and crisp from the periodical drought, still stand with their ripened seeds upon them, showing their natural luxuriance. Groves or parks of the evergreen oak relieve the monotony of the landscape, and dot the level plain as far as the eye can reach.

Captain Sutter received us with manifestations of cordial hospitality. He is a gentleman between forty-five and fifty years of age, and in manners, dress, and general deportment, he approaches so near what we call the "old school gentleman," as to present a gulfy contrast from the rude society by which he is surrounded. Captain Sutter is a native of Switzerland, and was at one time an officer in the French army. He emigrated to the United States, and was naturalized. From

thence, after a series of most extraordinary and romantic incidents, to relate which would furnish matter for a volume, he planted himself on the spot where his fort now stands, then a savage wilderness, and in the midst of numerous and hostile tribes of Indians. With the small party of men which he originally brought with him, he succeeded in defending himself against the Indians, until he constructed his first defensive building. He told me, that several times, being hemmed in by his assailants, he had subsisted for many days upon grass alone. There is a grass in this valley which the Indians eat, that is pleasant to the taste and nutritious. He succeeded by degrees in reducing the Indians to obedience, and by means of their labor erected the spacious fortification which now belongs to him.

The fort is a parallelogram, about five hundred feet in length and one hundred and fifty in breadth. The walls are constructed of adobes, or sun-dried bricks. The main building, or residence, stands near the centre of the area, or court, enclosed by the walls. A row of shops, store-rooms, and barracks, are enclosed within, and line the walls on every side. Bastions project from the angles, the ordnance mounted in which sweep the walls. The principal gates on the east and the south are also defended by heavy artillery, through portholes pierced in the walls. At this time the fort is manned by about fifty well-disciplined Indians, and ten or twelve white men, all under the pay of the United States. These Indians are well clothed and fed. The garrison is under the command of Mr. Kern, the artist of Captain Fremont's exploring expedition.

The number of laboring Indians employed by Captain Sutter during the seasons of sowing and harvest, is from two to three hundred. Some of these are clothed in shirts and blankets, but a large portion of them are entirely naked. They are paid so much per day for their labor, in such articles of merchandise as they may select from the store. Cotton cloth and handkerchiefs are what they most freely purchase. Common brown cotton cloth sells at one dollar per yard. A tin coin issued by Captain Sutter circulates among them, upon which is

stamped the number of days that the holder has labored. These stamps indicate the value in merchandise to which the laborer or holder is entitled.

They are inveterate gamblers, and those who have been so fortunate as to obtain clothing, frequently stake and part with every rag upon their backs. The game which they most generally play is carried on as follows. Any number which may be concerned in it seat themselves cross-legged on the ground, in a circle. They are then divided into two parties, each of which has two champions or players. A ball, or some small article, is placed in the hands of the players on one side, which they transfer from hand to hand with such sleight and dexterity that it is nearly impossible to detect the changes. When the players holding the balls make a particular motion with their hands, the antagonist players guess in which hand the balls are at the time. If the guess is wrong it counts one in favor of the playing party. If the guess is right, then it counts one in favor of the guessing party, and the balls are transferred to them. The count of the game is kept with sticks. During the progress of the game, all concerned keep up a continual monotonous grunting, with a movement of their bodies to keep time with their grunts. The articles which are staked on the game are placed in the centre of the ring.

The laboring or field Indians about the fort are fed upon the offal of slaughtered animals, and upon the bran sifted from the ground wheat. This is boiled in large iron kettles. It is then placed in wooden troughs standing in the court, around which the several messes seat themselves and scoop out with their hands this poor fodder. Bad as it is, they eat it with an apparent high relish; and no doubt it is more palatable and more healthy than the acorn, mush, or *atóle*, which constitutes the principal food of these Indians in their wild state.

The wheat crop of Captain Sutter, the present year, (1846,) is about eight thousand bushels. The season has not been a favorable one. The average yield to the acre Captain S. estimates at twenty-five bushels. In favorable seasons this yield is doubled; and if we can believe the statements often made

upon respectable authority, it is sometimes quadrupled. There is no doubt that in favorable seasons, that is when the rains fall abundantly during the winter, the yield of wheat, and all small grains in California, is much greater per acre of land than in any part of the United States. The wheat-fields of Captain S. are secured against the cattle and horses by ditches. Agriculture, among the native Californians, is in a very primitive state, and although Captain S. has introduced some American implements, still his ground is but imperfectly cultivated. With good cultivation the crops would be more certain and much more abundant. The crop from the same ground the second and third years, without sowing, is frequently very good.

Wheat is selling at the fort at two dollars and fifty cents per fanega, rather more than two bushels English measure. It brings the same price when delivered at San Francisco, near the mouth of the Bay of San Francisco. It is transported from the Sacramento valley to a market in launches of about fifty tons burden. Unbolted flour sells at eight dollars per one hundred pounds. The reason of this high price is the scarcity of flouring-mills in the country. The mills which are now going up in various places will reduce the price of flour, and probably they will soon be able to grind all the wheat raised in the country. The streams of California afford excellent water-power, but the flour consumed by Captain Sutter is ground by a very ordinary horse-mill.

I saw near the fort a small patch of hemp, which had been sown as an experiment, in the spring, and had not been irrigated. I never saw a ranker growth of hemp in Kentucky. Vegetables of several kinds appeared to be abundant and in perfection, but I shall speak more particularly of the agricultural productions of California in another place, when my knowledge of the country and its resources becomes, from observation, more general and perfect.

Captain Sutter's dining-room and his table furniture do not present a very luxurious appearance. The room is unfurnished, with the exception of a common deal table standing in the cen-

tre, and some benches, which are substitutes for chairs. The table, when spread, presented a correspondingly primitive simplicity of aspect and of viands. The first course consisted of good soup, served to each guest in a china bowl with silver spoons. The bowls, after they had been used for this purpose, were taken away and cleansed by the Indian servant, and were afterwards used as tumblers or goblets, from which we drank our water. The next course consisted of two dishes of meat, one roasted and one fried, and both highly seasoned with onions. Bread, cheese, butter, and melons, constituted the desert. I am thus particular because I wish to convey as accurately as I can the style and mode of living in California of intelligent gentlemen of foreign birth, who have been accustomed to all the luxuries of the most refined civilization.

It is not for the purpose of criticising, but to show how destitute the people of this naturally favored country have been of many of the most common comforts of domestic life, owing to the wretched system of government which has heretofore existed. Such has been the extortion of the government in the way of impost-duties, that few supplies which are included among even the most ordinary elegancies of life, have ever reached the inhabitants, and for these they have been compelled to pay prices that would be astonishing to a citizen of the United States or of Europe, and such as have impoverished the population. As a general fact, they cannot be obtained at any price, and hence those who have the ability to purchase are compelled to forego their use from necessity.

With our appetites, however, we enjoyed the dinner as much as if it had been served up in the most sumptuously-furnished dining-saloon, with all the table appurtenances of polished silver, sparkling crystal, and snow-like porcelain. By our long journey we had learned to estimate the value of a thing for its actual utility and the amount of enjoyment it confers. The day is not distant when American enterprise and American ingenuity will furnish those adjuncts of civilization of which California is now so destitute, and render a residence in this country one of the most luxurious upon the globe. The conversation at

dinner turned upon the events which have recently occurred in the country, and which I shall narrate in another place.

From the 3d to the 7th of September we remained encamped. Our camp is near an Indian *rancheria*. These *rancherias* consist of a number of huts constructed of a rib-work or frame of small poles or saplings in a conical shape, covered with straw, grass, or *tule*, a species of rush, which grows to the height of five or six feet. The huts are sometimes fifteen feet in diameter at their bases, and the number of them grouped together vary according to the number of the tribe which inhabits them. A different language in many respects is spoken at the different *rancherias*. In this remark I refer to the gentile Indians, as they are here called, and not to the christianized, the last of whom speak the Spanish. There was a large gathering at the *rancheria* on the night of the 6th to celebrate some event. Dancing, singing, loud shouting, and howling, were continued without intermission the whole night. One of their orgies consisted in fixing a scalp upon a pole and dancing around it, accompanying the dance with, at first, a low melancholy howl, then with loud shrieks and groans, until the performers appeared to become frantic with excitement of some kind, it would be difficult to tell what. The noise made by them was such as to prevent sleep, although a quarter of a mile distant from our camp.

The Sacramento river, at this point, is a stream nearly half a mile in width. The tide rises and falls some two or three feet. The water is perfectly limpid and fresh. The river is said to be navigable for craft of one hundred tons burden, at all seasons, a hundred miles above this place. In the season of high waters, from January to July, it is navigable a much greater distance. The Sacramento rises above latitude 42° north, and runs from north to south nearly parallel with the coast of the Pacific, until it empties into the Bay of San Francisco by several mouths in latitude 38½° north. It is fringed with timber, chiefly oak and sycamore. Grape-vines and a variety of shrubbery ornament its banks, and give a most charming effect when sailing upon its placid and limpid current. I never saw a more beautiful stream. In the rainy season, and in the spring, when the snows on the

mountains are melting, it overflows its banks in many places. It abounds in fish, the most valuable of which is the salmon. These salmon are the largest and the fattest I have ever seen. I have seen salmon taken from the Sacramento five feet in length. All of its tributaries are equally rich in the finny tribe. American enterprise will soon develop the wealth contained in these streams, which hitherto has been entirely neglected.

The site of the town of Nueva Helvetia, which has been laid out by Captain Sutter, is about a mile and a half from the Sacramento. It is on an elevation of the plain, and not subject to overflow when the waters of the river are at their highest known point. There are now but three or four small houses in this town, but I have little doubt that it will soon become a place of importance.

Near the *embarcadero* of New Helvetia is a large Indian "sweat-house," or *Temascál*, an appendage of most of the *rancherias*. The "sweat-house" is the most important medical agent employed by these Indians. It has, I do not doubt, the effect of consigning many of them to their graves, long before their appointed time. A "sweat-house" is an excavation in the earth, to the depth of six or eight feet, arched over with slabs split from logs. There is a single small aperture or skylight in the roof. These slabs are covered to the depth of several feet with earth. There is a narrow entrance, with steps leading down and into this subterraneous apartment. Rude shelves are erected around the walls, upon which the invalids repose their bodies. The door is closed and no air is admitted except from the small aperture in the roof, through which escapes the smoke of a fire kindled in the centre of the dungeon. This fire heats the apartment until the perspiration rolls from the naked bodies of the invalids in streams. I incautiously entered one of these caverns during the operation above described, and was in a few moments so nearly suffocated with the heat, smoke, and impure air, that I found it difficult to make my way out.

In the afternoon of the 7th, we received a note from Captain Sutter, stating that he had succeeded in obtaining a room in the fort for our accommodation, and inviting us to accept of it. He

sent two servants to assist in packing our baggage; and accepting the invitation, we took up our lodgings in the fort. By this change we were relieved from the annoyance of mosquitoes, which have troubled us much during the night at our encampment. But with this exception, so long have we been accustomed to sleeping in the open air, with no shelter but our blankets and the canopy of the heavens, that our encampment was preferable to our quarters within the confined walls of the fort.

It is scarcely possible to imagine a more delightful temperature, or a climate which is more agreeable and uniform. The sky is cloudless, without the slightest film of vapor apparent in all the vast azure vault. In the middle of the day the sun shines with great power, but in the shade it is nowhere uncomfortable. At night, so pure is the atmosphere, that the moon gives a light sufficiently powerful for the purposes of the reader or student who has good eyesight. There is no necessity of burning the "midnight oil." Nature here, lights the candle for the bookworm.

On the 9th, we commenced preparations for leaving the fort, for San Francisco, a journey by land of about two hundred miles. Our intention was to leave early the next morning. While thus engaged, some couriers arrived from the settlements on the Sacramento, about one hundred miles north, with the startling information that one thousand Walla-Walla Indians, from Oregon, had made their appearance in the valley, for hostile purposes. The couriers, who were themselves settlers, appeared to be in great alarm, and stated that they had seen the advance party of the Walla-Wallas, and that their object was to assault the fort for a murder which they alleged had been committed one or two years since, by an American upon a chief of their tribe, and for some indebtedness of Captain Sutter to them, in cattle, &c. In the event of a failure in their assault upon the fort, then they intended to drive off all the cattle belonging to the settlers in the valley. This was the substance of their information. It was so alarming, that we postponed at once our departure for San Francisco, and volun-

teered such assistance as we could render in defending the fort against this formidable invasion.

The Walla-Wallas are a powerful and warlike tribe of Indians, inhabiting a district of country on the Columbia river. They are reported to be good marksmen and fight with great bravery and desperation. Their warriors are armed with good rifles and an abundance of ammunition, which they procure from the Hudson's Bay Company. They are rapidly advancing in civilization, and many of them have good farms under cultivation, with numerous herds of cattle and horses.

Couriers were immediately dispatched in every direction to apprize the settlers in the valley of the invasion, and to the nearest military posts, for such assistance as they could render under the circumstances. The twelve pieces of artillery by which the fort is defended were put in order, and all inside were busily employed in preparing for the expected combat. Indian spies were also dispatched to reconnoitre and discover the position and actual number of the invaders.

The spies returned to the fort on the 11th without having seen the Walla-Walla invaders. A small party of some forty or fifty only, are supposed to be about twenty-five or thirty miles distant, on the opposite side of the Sacramento. On the twelfth, Lieut. Revere of the Navy, with a party of twenty-five men, arrived at the fort from Sonoma, to reinforce the garrison; and on the morning of the thirteenth, it having been pretty well ascertained that the reported 1000 hostile Walla-Wallas were a small party only of men, women, and children, whose disposition was entirely pacific, we determined to proceed immediately on our journey to San Francisco.

CHAPTER XXII.

Geographical sketch of California—Its political and social institutions—Colorado river—Valley and river of San Joaquin—Former government—Presidios—Missions—Ports and commerce.

Before proceeding farther in my travels through Upper California, for the general information of the reader, it will be proper to give a brief geographical sketch of the country, and some account of its political and social institutions, as they have heretofore existed.

The district of country known, geographically, as Upper California, is bounded on the north by Oregon, the forty-second degree of north latitude being the boundary line between the two territories; on the east by the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra de los Mimbres, a continuation of the same range; on the south by Sonora and Old or Lower California, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. Its extent from north to south is about 700 miles, and from east to west from 600 to 800 miles, with an area of about 400,000 square miles. A small portion only of this extensive territory is fertile or inhabitable by civilized man, and this portion consists chiefly in the strip of country along the Pacific Ocean, about 700 miles in length, and from 100 to 150 in breadth, bounded on the east by the Sierra Nevada and on the west by the Pacific. In speaking of Upper California, this strip of country is what is generally referred to.

The largest river of Upper California is the Colorado or Red, which has a course of about 1000 miles, and empties into the Gulf of California in latitude about 32° north. But little is known of the region through which this stream flows. The report of trappers, however, is that the river is *cañoned* between high mountains and precipices a large portion of its course, and that its banks and the country generally through which it flows