

Sutter. Starting about three o'clock, p. m., we travelled in a south course over a flat plain until sunset, and encamped near a small lake on the rancho of Mr. Murphy, near the Cosumne river, a tributary of the Sacramento, which heads near the foot of the Sierra Nevada. The stream is small, but the bottom-lands are extensive and rich. Mr. Murphy has been settled in California about two years, and, with his wife and several children, has resided at this place sixteen months, during which time he has erected a comfortable dwelling-house, and other necessary buildings and conveniences. His wheat crop was abundant this year; and he presented us with as much milk and fresh butter as we desired. The grass on the upland plain over which we have travelled, is brown and crisp from the annual drought. In the low bottom it is still green. Distance 18 miles.

September 14.—We crossed the Cosumne river about a mile from our camp, and travelled over a level plain covered with luxuriant grass and timbered with the evergreen oak, until three o'clock, when we crossed the Micklemes river, another tributary of the Sacramento, and encamped on its southern bank in a beautiful grove of live-oaks. The Micklemes, where we crossed it, is considerably larger than the Cosumnes. The soil of the bottom appears to be very rich, and produces the finest qualities of grasses. The grass on the upland is also abundant, but at this time it is brown and dead. We passed through large tracts of wild oats during the day; the stalks are generally from three to five feet in length.

Our Indian servant, or vaquero, feigned sickness this morning, and we discharged him. As soon as he obtained his discharge, he was entirely relieved from the excruciating agonies under which he had affected to be suffering for several hours. Eating his breakfast, and mounting his horse, he galloped off in the direction of the fort. We overtook this afternoon an English sailor, named Jack, who was travelling towards Monterey; and we employed him as cook and hostler for the remainder of the journey.

A variety of autumnal flowers, generally of a brilliant yellow,

are in bloom along the beautiful and romantic banks of the rivulet. Distance 25 miles.

September 15.—Our horses were frightened last night by bears, and this morning, with the exception of those which were picketed, had strayed so far that we did not recover them until ten o'clock. Our route has continued over a flat plain, generally covered with luxuriant grass, wild oats, and a variety of sparkling flowers. The soil is composed of a rich argillaceous loam. Large tracts of the land are evidently subject to annual inundations. About noon we reached a small lake surrounded by *tule*. There being no trail for our guidance, we experienced some difficulty in shaping our course so as to strike the San Joaquin river at the usual fording-place. Our man Jack, by some neglect or mistake of his own, lost sight of us, and we were compelled to proceed without him. This afternoon we saw several large droves of antelope and deer. Game of all kinds appears to be very abundant in this rich valley. Passing through large tracts of *tule* we reached the San Joaquin river at dark, and encamped on the eastern bank. Here we immediately made large fires and discharged pistols as signals to our man Jack, but he did not come into camp. Distance 35 miles.

September 16.—Jack came into camp while we were breakfasting, leading his tired horse. He had bivouacked on the plain, and fearful that his horse would break loose if he tied him, he held the animal by the bridle all night.

The ford of the San Joaquin is about forty or fifty miles from its mouth. At this season the water is at its lowest stage. The stream at the ford is probably one hundred yards in breadth, and our animals crossed it without much difficulty, the water reaching about midway of their bodies. Oak and small willows are the principal growth of wood skirting the river. Soon after we crossed the San Joaquin this morning we met two men, couriers, bearing dispatches from Commodore Stockton, the governor and commander-in-chief in California, to Sutter's Fort. Entering upon the broad plain we passed, in about three miles, a small lake, the water of which was so much impregnated

with alkali as to be undrinkable. The grass is brown and crisp, but the seed upon it is evidence that it had fully matured before the drought affected it. The plain is furrowed with numerous deep trails, made by the droves of wild horses, elk, deer, and antelope, which roam over and graze upon it. The hunting sportsman can here enjoy his favorite pleasure to its fullest extent.

Having determined to deviate from our direct course, in order to visit the rancho of Dr. Marsh, we parted from Messrs. McRee and Pickett about noon. We passed during the afternoon several *tule* marshes, with which the plain of the San Joaquin is dotted. At a distance, the tule of these marshes presents the appearance of immense fields of ripened corn. The marshes are now nearly dry, and to shorten our journey we crossed several of them without difficulty. A month earlier, this would not have been practicable. I have but little doubt that these marshes would make fine rice plantations, and perhaps, if properly drained, they might produce the sugar-cane.

While pursuing our journey we frequently saw large droves of wild horses and elk grazing quietly upon the plain. No spectacle of moving life can present a more animated and beautiful appearance than a herd of wild horses. They were divided into droves of some one or two hundred. When they noticed us, attracted by curiosity to discover what we were, they would start and run almost with the fleetness of the wind in the direction towards us. But arriving within a distance of two hundred yards, they would suddenly halt, and after bowing their necks into graceful curves, and looking steadily at us a few moments, with loud snortings they would wheel about and bound away with the same lightning speed. These evolutions they would repeat several times, until having satisfied their curiosity, they would bid us a final adieu, and disappear behind the undulations of the plain.

The herds of elk were much more numerous. Some of them numbered at least two thousand, and with their immense antlers presented, when running, a very singular and picturesque appearance. We approached some of these herds within fifty

yards before they took the alarm. Beef in California is so abundant, and of so fine a quality, that game is but little hunted, and not much prized. Hence the elk, deer, and even antelope, are comparatively very tame, and rarely run from the traveller, unless he rides very near them. Some of these elk are as large as a medium-sized Mexican mule.

We arrived at the rancho of Dr. Marsh about 5 o'clock, P. M., greatly fatigued with the day's ride. The residence of Dr. M. is romantically situated, near the foot of one of the most elevated mountains in the range separating the valley of the San Joaquin from the plain surrounding the Bay of San Francisco. It is called "Mount Diablo," and may be seen in clear weather a great distance. The dwelling of Dr. M. is a small one-story house, rudely constructed of adobes, and divided into two or three apartments. The flooring is of earth, like the walls. A table or two, and some benches and a bed, are all the furniture it contains. Such are the privations to which those who settle in new countries must submit. Dr. M. is a native of New England, a graduate of Harvard University, and a gentleman of fine natural abilities and extensive scientific and literary acquirements. He emigrated to California some seven or eight years since, after having travelled through most of the Mexican States. He speaks the Spanish language fluently and correctly, and his accurate knowledge of Mexican institutions, laws and customs, was fully displayed in his conversation in regard to them. He obtained the grant of land upon which he now resides, some ten or twelve miles square, four or five years ago; and although he has been constantly harassed by the wild Indians, who have several times stolen all his horses, and sometimes numbers of his cattle, he has succeeded in permanently establishing himself. The present number of cattle on his rancho is about two thousand, and the increase of the present year he estimates at five hundred.

I noticed near the house a vegetable garden, with the usual variety of vegetables. In another enclosure was the commencement of an extensive vineyard, the fruit of which (now ripe) exceeds in delicacy of flavor any grapes which I have

ever tasted. This grape is not indigenous, but was introduced by the *padres*, when they first established themselves in the country. The soil and climate of California have probably improved it. Many of the clusters are eight and ten inches in length, and weigh several pounds. The fruit is of medium size, and in color a dark purple. The rind is very thin, and when broken the pulp dissolves in the mouth immediately. Although Dr. M. has just commenced his vineyard, he has made several casks of wine this year, which is now in a state of fermentation. I tasted here, for the first time, *aguardiente*, or brandy distilled from the Californian grape. Its flavor is not unpleasant, and age, I do not doubt, would render it equal to the brandies of France. Large quantities of wine and *aguardiente* are made from the extensive vineyards farther south. Dr. M. informed me that his lands had produced a hundredfold of wheat without irrigation. This yield seems almost incredible; but if we can believe the statements of men of unimpeached veracity, there have been numerous instances of reproduction of wheat in California equalling and even exceeding this.

Some time in July, a vessel arrived at San Francisco from New York, which had been chartered and freighted principally by a party of Mormon emigrants, numbering between two and three hundred, women and children included. These Mormons are about making a settlement for agricultural purposes, on the San Joaquin river, above the rancho of Dr. Marsh. Two of the women and one of the men are now here, waiting for the return of the main party, which has gone up the river to explore and select a suitable site for the settlement. The women are young, neatly dressed, and one of them may be called good-looking. Captain Gant, formerly of the U. S. army, in very bad health, is also residing here. He has crossed the Rocky Mountains eight times, and, in various trapping excursions, has explored nearly every river between the settlements of the United States and the Pacific ocean.

The house of Dr. Marsh being fully occupied, we made our beds in a shed, a short distance from it. Suspended from one

of the poles forming the frame of this shed, was a portion of the carcass of a recently slaughtered beef. The meat was very fat, the muscular portions of it presenting that marbled appearance, produced by a mixture of the fat and lean, so agreeable to the sight and palate of the epicure. The horned cattle of California which I have thus far seen, are the largest and the handsomest in shape which I ever saw. There is certainly no breed in the United States equalling them in size. They, as well as the horses, subsist entirely upon the indigenous grasses, at all seasons of the year; and such are the nutritious qualities of the herbage, that the former are always in condition for slaughtering, and the latter have as much flesh upon them as is desirable, unless (which is often the case) they are kept up at hard work and denied the privilege of eating, or are broken down by hard riding. The varieties of grass are very numerous, and nearly all of them are heavily seeded when ripe, and are equal if not superior, as food for animals, to corn and oats. The horses are not as large as the breeds of the United States, but in point of symmetrical proportions and in capacity for endurance, they are fully equal to our best breeds. The distance we have travelled to-day I estimate at thirty-five miles.

Sept. 17.—The temperature of the mornings is most agreeable, and every other phenomenon accompanying it is correspondingly delightful to the senses. Our breakfast consisted of warm bread, made of unbolted flour, stewed beef, seasoned with *chile colorado*, a species of red pepper, and *frijoles*, a dark-colored bean, with coffee. After breakfast I walked with Dr. Marsh to the summit of a conical hill, about a mile distant from his house, from which the view of the plain on the north, south, and east, and the more broken and mountainous country on the west, is very extensive and highly picturesque. The hills and the plain are ornamented with the evergreen oak, sometimes in clumps or groves, at others standing solitary. On the summits, and in the gorges of the mountains, the cedar, pine, and fir, display their tall, symmetrical shapes; and the San Joaquin, at a distance of about ten miles, is belted by a dense forest of oak, sycamore, and smaller timber and shrubbery. The herds of

cattle are scattered over the plain,—some of them grazing upon the brown, but nutritious grass; others sheltering themselves from the sun, under the wide-spreading branches of the oaks. The *toute ensemble* of the landscape is charming.

Leaving Dr. Marsh's about three o'clock, P. M., we travelled fifteen miles, over a rolling and well-watered country, covered generally with wild oats, and arrived at the residence of Mr. Robert Livermore just before dark. We were most kindly and hospitably received, and entertained by Mr. L., and his interesting family. After our mules and baggage had been cared for, we were introduced to the principal room in the house, which consisted of a number of small adobe buildings, erected apparently at different times, and connected together. Here we found chairs, and for the first time in California, saw a side-board set out with glass tumblers, and chinaware. A decanter of *aguardiente*, a bowl of loaf-sugar, and a pitcher of cold water from the spring, were set before us; and being duly honored, had a most reviving influence upon our spirits as well as our corporeal energies. Suspended from the walls of the room were numerous coarse engravings, highly colored with green, blue, and crimson paints, representing the Virgin Mary, and many of the saints. These engravings are held in great veneration by the devout Catholics of this country. In the corners of the room were two comfortable-looking beds, with clean white sheets and pillow-cases, a sight with which my eyes have not been greeted for many months.

The table was soon set out, and covered with a linen cloth of snowy whiteness, upon which were placed dishes of stewed beef, seasoned with *chile colorado*, *frijoles*, and a plentiful supply of *tortillas*, with an excellent cup of tea, to the merits of which we did ample justice. Never were men blessed with better appetites than we are at the present time.

Mr. Livermore has been a resident of California nearly thirty years; and having married into one of the wealthy families of the country, is the proprietor of some of the best lands for tillage and grazing. An *arroyo*, or small rivulet fed by springs, runs through his rancho, in such a course that, if expedient, he

could, without much expense, irrigate one or two thousand acres. Irrigation in this part of California, however, seems to be entirely unnecessary for the production of wheat or any of the small grains. To produce maize, potatoes, and garden vegetables, irrigation is indispensable. Mr. Livermore has on his rancho about 3500 head of cattle. His horses, during the late disturbances, have nearly all been driven off or stolen by the Indians. I saw in his corral a flock of sheep numbering several hundred. They are of good size, and the mutton is said to be of an excellent quality, but the wool is coarse. It is, however, well adapted to the only manufacture of wool that is carried on in the country,—coarse blankets and *serápes*. But little attention is paid to hogs here, although the breeds are as fine as I have ever seen elsewhere. Beef being so abundant, and of a quality so superior, pork is not prized by the native Californians.

The Señora L. is the first Hispano-American lady I have seen since arriving in the country. She was dressed in a white cambric robe, loosely banded round the waist, and without ornament of any kind, except several rings on her small delicate fingers. Her complexion is that of a dark brunette, but lighter and more clear than the skin of most Californian women. The dark lustrous eye, the long black and glossy hair, the natural ease, grace, and vivacity of manners and conversation, characteristic of Spanish ladies, were fully displayed by her from the moment of our introduction. The children, especially two or three little *señoritas*, were very beautiful, and manifested a remarkable degree of sprightliness and intelligence. One of them presented me with a small basket wrought from a species of tough grass, and ornamented with the plumage of birds of a variety of brilliant colors. It was a beautiful specimen of Indian ingenuity.

Retiring to bed about ten o'clock, I enjoyed, the first time for four months, the luxury of clean sheets, with a mattress and a soft pillow. My enjoyment, however, was not unmixed with regret, for I noticed that several members of the family, to accommodate us with lodgings in the house, slept in the piazza

outside. To have objected to sleeping in the house, however, would have been considered discourteous and offensive.

September 18.—Early this morning a bullock was brought up and slaughtered in front of the house. The process of slaughtering a beef is as follows: A *vaquero*, mounted on a trained horse, and provided with a lasso, proceeds to the place where the herd is grazing. Selecting an animal, he soon secures it by throwing the noose of the lasso over the horns, and fastening the other end around the pommel of the saddle. During the first struggles of the animal for liberty, which usually are very violent, the *vaquero* sits firmly in his seat, and keeps his horse in such a position that the fury and strength of the beast are wasted without producing any other result than his own exhaustion. The animal, soon ascertaining that he cannot release himself from the rope, submits to be pulled along to the place of execution. Arriving here, the *vaquero* winds the lasso around the legs of the doomed beast and throws him to the ground, where he lies perfectly helpless and motionless. Dismounting from his horse, he then takes from his leggin the butcher-knife that he always carries with him, and sticks the animal in the throat. He soon bleeds to death, when, in an incredibly short space of time for such a performance, the carcass is flayed and quartered, and the meat is either roasting before the fire or simmering in the stewpan. The *lassoing* and slaughter of a bullock is one of the most exciting sports of the Californians; and the daring horsemanship and dexterous use of the lariat usually displayed on these occasions are worthy of admiration. I could not but notice the Golgotha-like aspect of the grounds surrounding the house. The bones of cattle were thickly strewn in all directions, showing a terrible slaughter of the four-footed tribe and a prodigious consumption of flesh.

A *carretada* of fossil oyster-shells was shown me by Mr. Livermore, which had been hauled for the purpose of being manufactured into lime. Some of these shells were eight inches in length, and of corresponding breadth and thickness. They were dug from a hill two or three miles distant, which is composed almost entirely of this fossil. Several bones belonging

to the skeleton of a whale, discovered by Mr. L. on the summit of one of the highest elevations in the vicinity of his residence, were shown to me. The skeleton when discovered was nearly perfect and entirely exposed, and its elevation above the level of the sea between one and two thousand feet. How the huge aquatic monster, of which this skeleton is the remains, managed to make his dry bed on the summit of an elevated mountain, more experienced geologists than myself will hereafter determine. I have an opinion on the subject, however, but it is so contrary in some respects to the received geological theories, that I will not now hazard it.

Leaving Mr. Livermore's about nine o'clock, A. M., we travelled three or four miles over a level plain, upon which immense herds of cattle were grazing. When we approached they fled from us, with as much alarm as herds of deer and elk. From this plain we entered a hilly country, covered to the summits of the elevations with wild oats and tufts or bunches of a species of grass, which remains green through the whole season. Cattle were scattered through these hills, and more sumptuous grazing they could not desire. Small streams of water, fed by springs, flow through the hollows and ravines, which, as well as the hill-sides, are timbered with the evergreen oak and a variety of smaller trees. About two o'clock, P. M., we crossed an *arroyo* which runs through a narrow gorge of the hills, and struck an artificial wagon-road, excavated and embanked so as to afford a passage for wheeled vehicles along the steep hill-side. A little farther on we crossed a very rudely-constructed bridge. These are the first signs of road-making I have seen in the country. Emerging from the hills, the southern arm of the Bay of San Francisco came in view, separated from us by a broad and fertile plain some ten or twelve miles in width, sloping gradually down to the shore of the bay, and watered by several small creeks and estuaries.

We soon entered through a narrow street the mission of San José, or St. Joseph. Passing the squares of one-story adobe buildings, once inhabited by thousands of busy Indians, but now deserted, roofless, and crumbling into ruins, we reached the

plaza in front of the church and the massive two-story edifices occupied by the *padres* during the flourishing epoch of the establishment. These were in good repair, but the doors and windows with the exception of one were closed, and nothing of moving life was visible except a donkey or two, standing near a fountain which gushed its waters into a capacious stone trough. Dismounting from our mules, we entered the open door, and here we found two Frenchmen dressed in sailor costume, with a quantity of coarse shirts, pantaloons, stockings, and other small articles, together with *aguardiente*, which they designed retailing to such of the natives in the vicinity as chose to become their customers. They were itinerant merchants, or pedlars, and had opened their wares here for a day or two only, or so long as they could find purchasers.

Having determined to remain here the residue of the day, and the night, we inquired of the Frenchmen if there was any family in the place that could furnish us with food. They directed us to a house on the opposite side of the plaza, to which we immediately repaired. The señora, a dark-skinned and rather shrivelled and filthy specimen of the fair sex, but with a black, sparkling, and intelligent eye, met us at the door of the miserable hovel and invited us in. In one corner of this wretched and foul abode was a pile of raw hides, and in another a heap of wheat. The only furniture it contained were two small benches, or stools, one of which, being higher than the other, appeared to have been constructed for a table. We informed the señora that we were travellers, and wished refreshment and lodgings for the night. "*Está bueno, señores, está bueno,*" was her reply; and she immediately left us, and opening the door of the kitchen, commenced the preparation of our dinner. The interior of the kitchen, of which I had a good view through the door, was more revolting in its filthiness than the room in which we were seated. In a short time, so industrious was our hostess, our dinner, consisting of two plates of jerked beef, stewed, and seasoned with *chile colorado*, a plate of *tortillas*, and a bowl of coffee, was set out upon the most elevated stool. There were no knives, forks, or spoons,

on the table. Our amiable landlady apologized for this deficiency of table furniture, saying that she was "*muy pobre,*" (very poor,) and possessed none of these table implements. "Fingers were made before forks," and in our recent travels we had learned to use them as substitutes, so that we found no difficulty in conveying the meat from the plates to our mouths.

Belonging to the mission are two gardens, enclosed by high adobe walls. After dinner we visited one of these. The area of the enclosure contains fifteen or twenty acres of ground, the whole of which is planted with fruit-trees and grape-vines. There are about six hundred pear-trees, and a large number of apple and peach trees, all bearing fruit in great abundance and in full perfection. The quality of the pears is excellent, but the apples and peaches are indifferent. The grapes have been gathered, as I suppose, for I saw none upon the vines, which appeared healthy and vigorous. The gardens are irrigated with very little trouble, from large springs which flow from the hills a short distance above them. Numerous aqueducts, formerly conveying and distributing water over an extensive tract of land surrounding the mission, are still visible, but as the land is not now cultivated, they at present contain no water.

The mission buildings cover fifty acres of ground, perhaps more, and are all constructed of adobes with tile roofs. Those houses or barracks which were occupied by the Indian families, are built in compact squares, one story in height. They are generally partitioned into two rooms, one fronting on the street, the other upon a court or corral in the rear. The main buildings of the mission are two stories in height, with wide corridors in front and rear. The walls are massive, and if protected from the winter rains, will stand for ages. But if exposed to the storms by the decay of the projecting roofs, or by leaks in the main roof, they will soon crumble, or sink into shapeless heaps of mud. I passed through extensive warehouses and immense rooms, once occupied for the manufacture of woollen blankets and other articles, with the rude machinery still standing in them, but unemployed. Filth and desolation have taken the place of cleanliness and busy life. The granary was very ca-

pacious, and its dimensions were an evidence of the exuberant fertility of the soil, when properly cultivated under the superintendence of the *padres*. The calaboose is a miserable dark room of two apartments, one with a small loophole in the wall, the other a dungeon without light or ventilation. The stocks, and several other inventions for the punishment of offenders, are still standing in this prison. I requested permission to examine the interior of the church, but it was locked up, and no person in the mission was in possession of the key. Its length I should suppose is from one hundred to one hundred and twenty feet, and its breadth between thirty and forty, with small exterior pretensions to architectural ornament or symmetry of proportions.

Returning from our rambles about the mission, we found that our landlady had been reinforced by an elderly woman, whom she introduced as "*mi madre*," and two or three Indian *muchachas*, or girls, clad in a costume not differing much from that of our mother Eve. The latter were obese in their figures, and the mingled perspiration and filth standing upon their skins were any thing but agreeable to the eye. The two señoras, with these handmaids near them, were sitting in front of the house, busily engaged in executing some needlework.

Supper being prepared and discussed, our landlady informed us that she had a husband, who was absent, but would return in the course of the night, and if he found strange men in the house, he would be much offended with her. She had therefore directed her *muchachas* to sweep out one of the deserted and half-ruined rooms on the opposite square, to which we could remove our baggage, and in which we could lodge during the night; and as soon as the necessary preparations were made, we retired to our dismal apartment. The "compound of villanous smells" which saluted our nostrils when we entered our dormitory for the night, augured unfavorably for repose. The place had evidently been the abode of horses, cattle, pigs, and foul vermin of every description. But with the aid of a dark-colored tallow-candle, which gave just light enough to display the murkiness and filth surrounding us, we spread our

beds in the cleanest places, and laid down to rest. Distance travelled, 18 miles.

CHAPTER XXV.

Armies of fleas—Leave the mission—Clover—Wild mustard—A carreta—Family travelling—Arrive at Pueblo de San José—Capt. Fisher—Description of the Pueblo—The embarcadero—Beautiful and fertile valley of the Pueblo—Absence of architectural taste in California—Town squirrels—Fruit garden—Grapes—Tropical fruits—Gaming rooms—Contrast between Californian and American gamblers—Leave San José—Beautiful avenue—Mission of Santa Clara—Rich but neglected lands—Effects of a bad government—A señora on the road-side—Kindness of Californian women—Fast riding—Cruel treatment of horses—Arrive at the mission of San Francisco—A poor but hospitable family—Arrive at the town of San Francisco—W. A. Leidesdorff, Esq., American vice-consul—First view of the Bay of San Francisco—Muchachos and Muchachas—Capt. Montgomery—U. S. sloop-of-war Portsmouth—Town of San Francisco; its situation, appearance, population—Commerce of California—Extortion of the government and traders.

SEPT. 19.—Several Californians came into the mission during the night or early this morning; among them the husband of our hostess, who was very kind and cordial in his greetings.

While our man Jack was saddling and packing the mules, they gathered around us to the number of a dozen or more, and were desirous of trading their horses for articles of clothing; articles which many of them appeared to stand greatly in need of, but which we had not to part from. Their pertinacity exceeded the bounds of civility, as I thought; but I was not in a good humor, for the fleas, bugs, and other vermin, which infested our miserable lodgings, had caused me a sleepless night, by goring my body until the blood oozed from the skin in countless places. These ruinous missions are prolific generators, and the nurseries of vermin of all kinds, as the hapless traveller who tarries in them a few hours will learn to his sorrow. When