

CHAPTER V.

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAINS.—EMIGRANTS.—PISTOLS AND PILLOWS.—LEADERS OF THE INSURRECTION.—CALIFORNIA PLOUGH.—DEFEAT AT SAN PEDRO.—COL. FREMONT'S BAND.—THE MALEK ADHEL.—MONTEREY THREATENED.—SOLDIER OUTWITTED.—RAISING MEN.—BRIDEGROOM.—CULPRITS.

MONDAY, OCT. 12. A wide conflagration is sweeping over the hills which encircle the bay of Monterey. The forests, and the grass with which they are feathered, are as dry as tinder, and the flame rolls on with its line of fire clearly and fearfully defined. This has become still more grand and awful since the night set in. The clouds seem to float in an atmosphere of fire; and the billows, as they roll to the rock-bound shore, are crested with flame. The birds are flying from their crackling covert, and the wolves go howling over the hills. It is a type of that final conflagration in which the great frame of nature will at last sink.

TUESDAY, OCT. 13. Emigrants from the United States are still pouring into the rich valley of the Sacramento. A letter from one of them says:—"It may not be uninteresting to you to know that the emigrants by land the present season far exceed the expectation of the most sanguine. No less than two thousand are now in the interior, and within a hundred miles of the settlements. They bring with them

a large amount of intelligence, wealth, and industry, all of which are greatly needed in their new home. The Mormons alone have a train of more than three hundred wagons."

These emigrants will change the face of California. We shall soon have not only the fruits of nature, but of human industry. We shall soon be able to get a ball of butter without churning it on the back of a wild colt; and a potatoe without weighing it as if it were a doubloon. Were it possible for a man to live without the trouble of drawing his breath, I should look for this pleasing phenomenon in California.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14. The success of the insurgents at the south has emboldened the reckless here. Bands have been gathering in the vicinity to make a night assault on Monterey. Their plan is to capture or drive out the small American force here, and plunder the town. Those engaged in it are men of desperate fortunes. The streets to-day have been barricaded, and the true and trusty among the citizens have been formed into a night patrol. I sleep with my rifle at my bedside, and with two pistols under my pillow. My servant, who is a brave little fellow, is also armed to the teeth. He ought to be brave, for he was born in St. Helena, close to the tomb of Napoleon, and must have caught some fire from the hero's ashes. My house has grated windows, and an entrance that is easily defended against odds, so that we shall probably make a pretty good fight of it.

One thing is certain, neither of us go out alive. I will not be taken, tortured, and hacked to pieces, as two of our countrymen were a few months since.

THURSDAY, OCT. 15. No assault yet; but a company of horsemen have been seen to-day crossing the southern plain, and winding off behind the hills at the west. They have, as a messenger informs us, joined another party much larger than their own, and are now encamped in the woods. The citizens here who have been true to our flag, feel deeply alarmed; and in truth they have some occasion, for if the town is sacked they will be among the first sufferers. I have sent an express to Com. Stockton, who is at San Francisco, where he has been engaged in raising and dispatching a heavy force for San Pedro. He will be here with the Congress as fast as the winds and waves can bring him.

FRIDAY, OCT. 16. Our relief has come. The Congress arrived to-day, and the commodore immediately landed, under Capt. Maddox, U. S. marine corps, a sufficient force to repel any attack that may be made. Our friends now breathe more freely. They may go outside the town without the fear of having their retreat cut off by a flying horseman, and sleep at night without the apprehension of awaking under a flaming roof. The noble tars of the Congress, when they saw our flag still flying on the fort, hailed it with three stout cheers, which were heard over all Monterey.

They feared, and not without reason, that it had been captured; and when they saw it still streaming on the wind, their enthusiasm and joy broke forth.

SATURDAY, OCT. 17. As soon as the intelligence of the insurrection below reached Com. Stockton, he dispatched the Savannah to San Pedro; and sent fast in her wake a quick coaster, with Col. Fremont and two hundred riflemen on board, who are to land in the night at Santa Barbara, and take the place by surprise. This was managed with so much celerity and secrecy, that the disaffected here are still ignorant of the fact.

What will be the surprise of the insurgents at Los Angeles, if defeated by the forces of the Savannah, to find their retreat cut off by the riflemen of Col. Fremont! Between these two fires there will be little chance of escape. Not a few of them have given their parole of honor that they will not, on pain of death, take up arms against the United States. They are now in the field, and their treachery may cost them their lives. It is painful, but may be necessary to make examples of them. California will never have any repose while they are in it. They have headed every revolution that has taken place for years, and they have now headed their last.

SUNDAY, OCT. 18. I issued, a few days since, an ordinance against gambling—a vice which shows itself here more on the Sabbath than any other day of

the week. The effect of it has been to drive the gamblers from the town into the bushes. I have been informed this evening, that in a ravine, at a short distance, some thirty individuals have been engaged through the day in this desperate play. They selected a spot deeply embowered in shade, and escaped the eye of my constables. But there is an eye from the glance of which the gloom of the forest and even the recesses of night afford no refuge.

MONDAY, OCT. 19. Some twenty men left the precincts of Monterey, last night, to join the insurgents at the south. They are all men of desperate fortunes, and may find that they have started too late. They who have been duped may perhaps be spared, but the ring-leaders are doomed. There is only one resting-place for them in California. He who breaks his solemnly plighted faith, can claim no mercy for the past and no confidence for the future.

Were this frantic insurrection sustained by the slightest probability of success, it would relieve, perhaps, its madness and atrocity. But they who instigated it knew it must end in disaster and blood. They knew its only trophies must be a little plunder, cursed by the crimes through which it had been procured. They threw themselves down this cataract, and will never again reascend its steep wave.

TUESDAY, OCT. 20. The mode of cultivating land in California is eminently primitive. In December or

A United States deserter, from the fort at Monterey, on his way to the mines, upon the back of a mule which the Vulture claims.



January they take a piece of wood in the shape of a ship's knee, dress it down a little with a dull axe, and spike a piece of iron to the lower point. A pole, by which the oxen draw, runs from the inner bend of the knee to the yoke. This pole has a mortise, about eight inches long, made slanting, and about a foot from the after end; a piece of wood, about two inches by six, runs up through the plough and pole, and is so wedged into the mortise of the pole, as to make the plough run shallow or deep as required. But if the ground happens to be hard the plough will not enter an inch, and if there are roots in the ground it must be lifted over, or it will be invariably broken. Such is a California plough; such a fair specimen of the arts here.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 21. If late in the season, the Californian rarely prepares the ground by any furrowing attempts. He scatters the seed about the field, and then scratches it in with the thing which he calls a plough. Should this scratching fail of yielding him sixty bushels to the acre, he grumbles. In reaping he cuts so high, to save a little trouble in threshing, which is done here by horses, that he loses one-eighth of his crop; but this eighth serves for seed the next season; and what to him is better still, saves the trouble of sowing. So that his second crop plants itself from the first, and is often nearly as large as its predecessor. Even the third self-planted crop is quite respectable, and would satisfy a New England farmer

for his laborious toil ; but here it generally goes to the blackbirds.

THURSDAY, OCT. 22. A mother came to me, to-day, with a request that I would summon before me another woman, who had slandered her daughter. I tried to dissuade her from it—told her that persevering virtue would outlive all scandal. But she said she was a poor widow, and the reputation of her family was all she had to depend on. So I summoned the woman, who confessed her injurious words, but said they had been uttered in passion, and that she now deeply regretted them. On her assurance that she would repair as far as in her power any injury she had done, I dismissed the parties.

FRIDAY, OCT. 23. The merchant ship Vandalia is just in from San Pedro, with intelligence from the seat of war. Capt. Gillespie, it seems, had been obliged to capitulate ; but the terms were that he should leave the Pueblo with all the honors of war. He marched out of the town with his flag flying ; and, on arriving at San Pedro, embarked on board the Vandalia.

The frigate Savannah soon hove in sight. Her forces under Capt. Mervin, and those from the Vandalia under Capt. Gillespie, started at once for the Pueblo. After a march of fifteen miles, they encamped for the night. But their slumbers were soon disturbed by a shot, which thundered its way into their midst. They seized their arms, but in the darkness of the

night nothing could be seen, and nothing heard save the distant tramp of horses. At break of day they renewed their march, but had not proceeded far before they were attacked by a Californian force on horseback, drawing a four-pounder. Their enemy kept out of the range of their muskets, fled as fast as they charged, and, having gained a safe distance, wheeled and played upon them with their four-pounder, charged with grape. Capt. Mervin, finding himself unable to bring the enemy to a general engagement, and having five of his men killed, and a greater number wounded, ordered a retreat, and returned without further molestation on board the Savannah. His defeat lay in the fact that his men were all on foot, and without any artillery to protect them against the longer range of the piece which the enemy had brought into the field.

SATURDAY, OCT. 24. Col. Fremont having fallen in with the Vandalia, and ascertained from her that no horses could be procured for his men at Santa Barbara, decided on returning in the Sterling to this port. His arrival has been delayed by a succession of light head winds, and dead calms. When within fifty miles of the port, a boat was dispatched, which is just in. Several of his men came in her, who are to start in advance in quest of horses. They will probably have to go as far as the Sacramento, for all the horses in this immediate vicinity have been driven south by the insurgents. I have lost both of mine ; but what

are two to the hundred and fifty which were driven from the farm of one man. If misery loves company, I have a plenty of that sort of consolation. But the extent of a misfortune depends not so much on what is taken, as what is left. The last surviving child in a family is invested with the affections which encircled the whole.

SUNDAY, OCT. 25. With us the sound of the church-going bell has been exchanged for the roll of the drum. One of the moral miseries of war is the profanation of the Sabbath which it involves. There is something in military movements which seems to cut the conscience adrift from its moorings on this subject.

MONDAY, OCT. 26. We shall soon see what the genius of Com. Stockton is equal to in a great emergency. He will arrive at San Pedro without horses, or any means of procuring them. They are all driven off, or under men who seem as if born on the saddle. He will encounter on his march to Los Angeles the same flying artillery which foiled the forces under Capt. Mervin. But he will have several well-mounted pieces; they must be drawn, however, by oxen over a deep sandy road. If the enemy comes within range, he will open and give them a volley of grape. In this way he will reach, recapture the place, and unfurl the stars and stripes. But how he will maintain himself—how he will procure

provisions with the country around in the hands of a mounted enemy, remains to be seen. Military genius, however, asserts its fullest force in the greatest emergency. It is like the eagle exulting in peril, and throwing its strong pinions on the mountain storm.

TUESDAY, OCT. 27. The prize brig Malek Adhel, commanded by Lieut. W. B. Renshaw, arrived in port this afternoon in thirty days from Mazatlan. She brings the first intelligence of her own capture. The U. S. ship Warren, under Commander Hull, anchored off Mazatlan on the sixth ult., and found there the Malek Adhel, moored within a hundred and fifty yards of the mole, with sails unbent, and running rigging unrove. The next day her rudder was to have been unshipped, and she was to have been hauled up the creek for safe keeping. Commander Hull determined immediately to cut her out; hauled his ship in close to the bar, and sent sixty men in the launch and the three cutters, under charge of Lieuts. Radford and Renshaw, with orders to bring her out, or finding that impracticable, to burn her. On their approach, the officer in charge escaped to the shore: they boarded her without opposition, unmoored and warped her outside the bar. While doing this, about two hundred and fifty Mexican soldiers mustered on the mole; another party dragged a field-piece up the hill abreast of the brig, commanding her and the channel to the bar; but upon a second thought the governor determined to offer no resistance, alleging that the

Warren's guns would do more damage to the town than the brig was worth. The *Malek Adhel*, however, is a valuable prize, being a fine sailer and a good sea-boat; she was gallantly captured.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 28. The *Sterling* is just in with Col. Fremont and his riflemen. They are in a half-starved condition, having been for several days on the very shortest commons. I never met with a more famished crew. The call for meat and bread roused up all the butchers and bakers in Monterey. What an energy there is in downright hunger!

THURSDAY, OCT. 29. Our Indian scouts, who came in yesterday, reported the discovery of a large band of Californians in the cover of the hills within the vicinity of Monterey. They probably purposed an attack on the town last night, as the garrison had been weakened by the absence of thirty men, who had left, under the command of Capt. Maddox, for San Juan. But the unexpected arrival of Col. Fremont frustrated their plans. We might have a battle with them were there horses here; but to attempt it on foot, would be like a man with a wooden leg chasing a hare.

Monterey has at present much the aspect of a military garrison. The streets are barricaded; a patrol is kept up night and day; no one is permitted to leave without a written passport, and no one allowed to enter without reporting himself to the police.

No one can be in the streets after nine without the countersign. Every thing, of course, in the shape of amusement is at an end; even ordinary business is in a great measure suspended. You hear only the roll of the drum at muster, and the toll of the bell over some one going to his last rest.

FRIDAY, OCT. 30. One of the guard in charge of Col. Fremont's horses, in the vicinity of the town, was approached, this afternoon, by two Californians on horseback, who inquired if he had seen a buck break from the woods near by. Having by this natural question laid suspicion, they entered into conversation on other topics, watched their opportunity, seized his rifle, shot him, and dashed off at full speed. The nefarious act produced a profound sensation in the camp. The shot, however, proves not mortal, so that the wounded man may yet have an opportunity of facing his foe in the field.

SATURDAY, OCT. 31. Enlistments are going on actively among the emigrants recently arrived on the banks of the Sacramento. The women and children are placed in the missions; the men take the rifle and start for the battle-field: such is their welcome to California. The Israelites entered the land of promise by arms, and established themselves by the force of their military prowess. But this is not quite the land of promise, nor are these Israelites who stream over the Rocky Mountains. But they are a

sturdy band, whose enterprise will cover these fertile hills with golden harvests. They have pitched their tents by the water-courses, and those tents they will never strike.

They are enlisted into the service mainly through the activity of Capt. Montgomery, who commands the Portsmouth, and is military commandant of the northern department of California. His measures have been judicious, his action prompt, and he has rendered substantial service in supplying from the emigrations the sinews of war. Every American in California shows his entire stature; no one is lost in the crowd; no voice is drowned by a general clamor; every action tells. It is a blow which thunders by itself on the great anvil of time. It is another rock rolled into the foundations of a mighty empire.

SUNDAY, NOV. 1. An Indian was taken up by one of our scouts yesterday, who confessed that he was the bearer of a message from a Roman Catholic priest to a party that were arming themselves to join the insurrection. The message conveyed intelligence of the approach of our forces. The Indian was sent back to his master with the intelligence that if he attempted any further correspondence with the enemy, it would be at the peril of his life.

MONDAY, NOV. 2d. Our bay is full of the finest fish, and yet it is rare to meet one on the table. There is not a boat here in which one can safely trust him-

self a cable's length from land. And if there were, there would be no Californians to row it. Could they go to sea on their horses, and fish from their saddles, they would often be seen dashing through the surf; but to sit quietly in a boat and bob a line, is entirely too tame a business. Put a fish on land, and give him the speed of the buck, and he would have a dozen Californians and forty hounds on his trail.

TUESDAY, NOV. 3. A Californian in my employ asked me to-day to pay him a small sum in advance of his services, stating that he was on the eve of being married, and wanted this advance to enable him to put silver mountings on his saddle and bridle. Had he asked me for money with which to pay the priest, I should have understood the propriety of the request; but the connection between a silver star on the head-stall of his bridle and a marriage celebration, surpassed my dim comprehension. However, as there was a lady in the case, I let him have the money. But it seems it is the custom here, for the bridegroom to appear on his wedding-day upon a splendid horse, elegantly caparisoned. It is then the silver star shines out. The noble steed and glittering trappings divide with the bride the admiration of the crowd.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 4. The Californians now in arms number twelve or fourteen hundred. They are from every section of the country. Their rallying point is Los Angeles. They have made a clean

sweep of all the horses along the coast. Natives as well as foreigners are left to get along on foot. This is not an easy task in a country where furlongs stretch into leagues.

Of these twelve hundred in arms, probably not a hundred have a foot of land. They drift about like Arabs, stealing the horses on which they ride, and the cattle on which they subsist. They are ready to join any revolution, be its leaders whom they may. If the tide of fortune turns against them, they disband and scatter to the four winds. They never become martyrs in any cause. They are too numerous to be brought to punishment. No government has been strong enough to set them at defiance, or dispense with their venal aid. They have now, however, to deal with a power too sagacious to be cajoled, and too strong to be overawed. They will not be permitted to spring a revolution, and leave its consequences to others. The results will follow them into every forest and fastness. They have but one escape, and that leads into Mexico. Men of substance will regret their loss about as much as the Egyptians the disappearance of the locusts.

THURSDAY, NOV. 5. The second rain of the season fell last night. It came down copiously for several hours: multitudes forgot their dreams in listening to its grateful patter on the roof. The effects of the first shower, which fell a few days since, are visible in the landscape.

From the moist meadow to the withered hill,
Led by the breeze, the vivid verdure runs,
And swells and deepens to the cherished eye.

FRIDAY, NOV. 6. Two Californians were arrested to-day by one of my constables, charged with having broken open a shop and robbed it of many valuable articles. The burglary was committed several nights since, but no clue to the perpetrators could be obtained. By keeping silent on the subject, one of them had at last the imprudence to offer for sale one of the stolen articles, which was immediately identified, and led to the detection of both. Most of the property was found in their possession, and restored to its owners. The evidence of their guilt being conclusive, and there being no young lawyer here to pick a flaw in the indictment, or help them to an *alibi*, they were sentenced each to the public works for one year. The way of transgressors is hard.

SATURDAY, NOV. 7. In Monterey, as in all other towns that I have ever seen, crimes are perpetrated mostly at night. The Indian, however, steals when the temptation presents itself, and trusts luck for the consequences. And in truth if any being has a right to steal, it is the civilized Indian of California. All the mission lands, with their delicious orchards, waving grain, flocks and herds, were once his, and were stolen from him by the white man. He has only one mode of retaliating these wrongs. But Californians

and foreigners, more wary, steal at night. It is as true here as elsewhere—

“That when the searching eye of heaven is hid
Behind the globe, and lights the lower world,
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen,
In murders, and in outrage, bloody here;
But when, from under this terrestrial ball,
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,
And darts his light through every guilty hole,
Then murders, treasons, and detested sins,
The cloak of night being plucked from off their backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves.”

SUNDAY, NOV. 8. There is not, except myself, a Protestant clergyman in California. If the tide of emigration continues, there will be thousands here without a spiritual teacher. Years must elapse before any can be trained here for the sacred office. The supply must come from abroad. The American churches must wake up to their duty on this subject. These emigrants are their children, and they should extend to them their most jealous care.