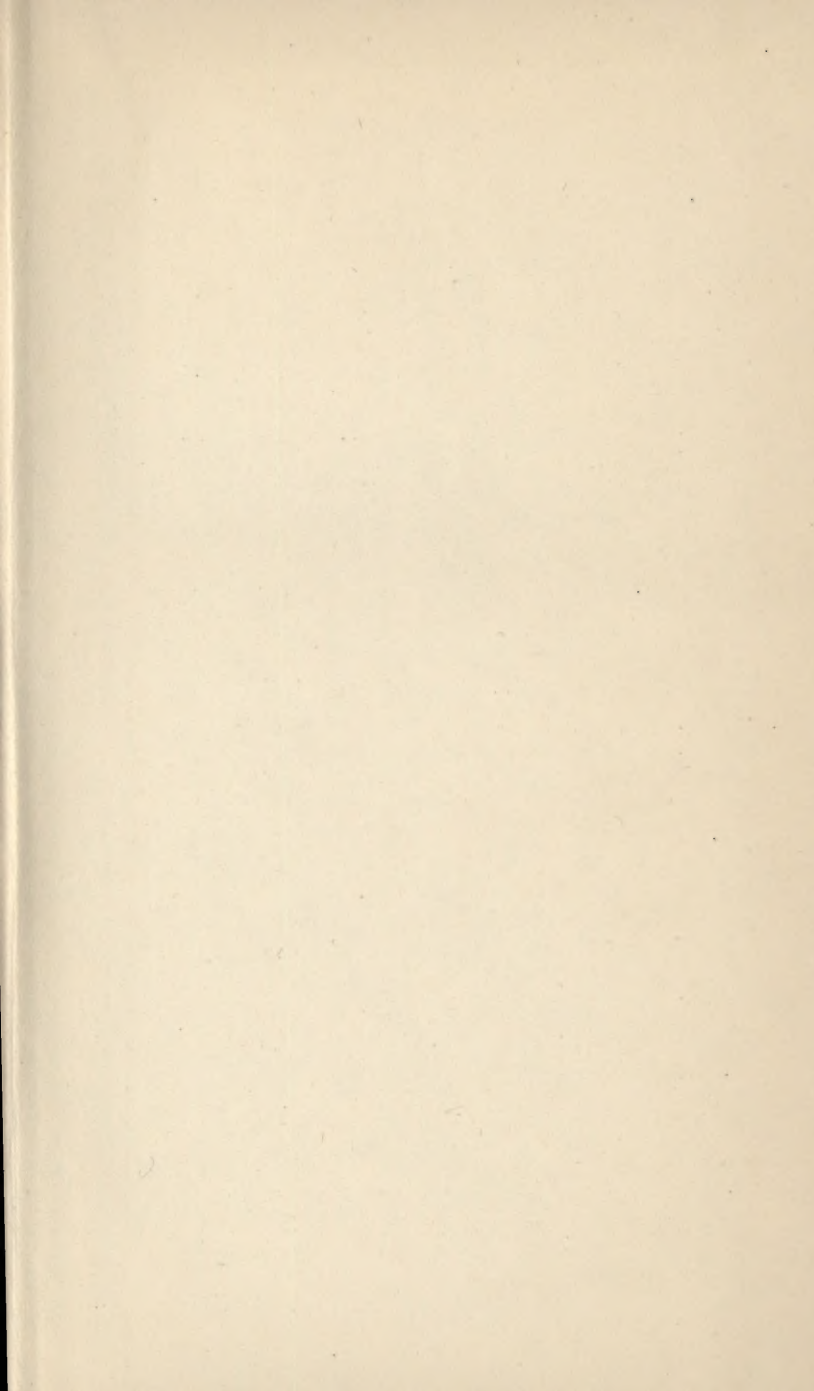


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*Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> 1856  
by Geo. W. Brainerd*

# SCENERY

OF

## THE PLAINS, MOUNTAINS AND MINES:

OR

A DIARY KEPT UPON THE OVERLAND ROUTE

TO

# CALIFORNIA,

BY WAY OF THE GREAT SALT LAKE:

TRAVELS IN THE CITIES, MINES, AND AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS—  
EMBRACING THE RETURN BY

## THE PACIFIC OCEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA,

In the Years 1850, '51, '52 and '53.

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BY

### FRANKLIN LANGWORTHY.

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I speak of things which I have seen and do know, touching men and objects  
in a stirring period of my country's history.

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*Geo. W. Brainerd,*  
780  
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OGDENSBURGH:

PUBLISHED BY J. C. SPRAGUE, BOOK-SELLER.

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HITCHCOCK & TILLOTSON, PRINTERS.

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1855.



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Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1854,  
BY FRANKLIN LANGWORTHY,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States,  
for the Northern District of New York.

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## PREFACE.

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The year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty, is an epoch that will be memorable in the history of the United States. It was a year that will be long remembered, as one of unparalleled emigration, suffering, and death. The official announcement of the astounding facts in relation to the Gold Discoveries in California, seemed to move the whole Nation, as with an electric shock, and a vast multitude, of more than sixty thousand human beings, were seen rushing across immense plains and deserts, and over tremendous mountains, flushed with high hopes, and eager to fill their coffers with the glittering dust. I was an eye-witness of these exciting scenes, and assisted by my presence to swell the numbers of the mighty throng.

The following pages consist of a brief description of the varied scenes I have witnessed, and the countries through which I have passed, in going the Land Route

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to California, by way of the Great Salt Lake, and the return by way of Central America, and the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

I have personally surveyed many of the wildest and most picturesque scenes to be found upon our globe. I have kept a Daily Journal, while going and returning, (but not while I was residing at Salt Lake, or in California.) Of those countries I have given general descriptions. I have designed to give such plain and graphic accounts, as would enable the reader to see the various objects delineated, as though he was personally present.

The work, with all its imperfections, is hereby offered to an inquisitive and enlightened public, by its most devoted and humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Near MOUNT CARROLL, Illinois.

4000



# C O N T E N T S.

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## CHAPTER I.

	PAGE.
FROM THE MISSISSIPPI TO COUNCIL BLUFFS, . . . . .	7.

## CHAPTER II.

THE PLAINS ALONG THE PLATTE TO FORT LARAMIE, . . . . .	24.
--	-----

## CHAPTER III.

THE BLACK HILLS AND ROCKY MOUNTAINS—ARRIVAL AT SALT LAKE, . . . . .	57.
---	-----

## CHAPTER IV.

SCENERY OF SALT LAKE VALLEY, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE MORMONS, . . . . .	86.
---	-----

## CHAPTER V.

SALINE AND HOT SPRINGS—GOOSE CREEK AND THE HUMBOLDT RIVER, . . . . .	111.
--	------

## CHAPTER VI.

THE GREAT DESERT—CARSON VALLEY—THE SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS—ARRIVAL IN CALIFORNIA, . . . . .	142.
---	------

## CHAPTER VII.

	PAGE.
SCENERY OF CALIFORNIA AND THE MINES, . . . . .	181.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MISCELLANEOUS DESCRIPTIONS, THROWING FURTHER LIGHT ON CALIFORNIAN INCIDENTS AND SCENES,	210.
--	------

## CHAPTER IX.

TWENTY DAYS IN SAN FRANCISCO, AND THE AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT OF SAN JOSE VALLEY, . .	234.
---	------

## CHAPTER X.

SCENES ON THE PACIFIC OCEAN, AND VIEWS ALONG THE COASTS OF MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA,	247.
---	------

## CHAPTER XI.

CENTRAL AMERICA—LAKE NICARAUGA, WITH ITS VOLCANIC ISLAND—THE RIVER SAN JUAN— VOYAGE UPON THE ATLANTIC TO NEW YORK, .	266.
--	------

## CHAPTER XII.

GLANCE AT NEW YORK, AND THE COUNTRY FROM THENCE TO THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI— PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRAIRIES, . . . . .	303.
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# JOURNAL.

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## CHAPTER I.

Start for California—Outfit—Mississippi river.—Companies of fifty persons recommended.—A returned Californian.—Tipton.—State of Iowa.—Lost from my Company.—Iowa City, the Capital.—Iowa river, &c.—Number of Emigrants passed Iowa City.—Newton, Jasper County.—Quarrel at Skunk river—Fort Desmoines.—Scarcity of timber in Western Iowa.—Fondness for Titles.—Inscriptions on trees, bones, &c.—Mormon settlements.—Kanesville, a Mormon town—Emigrants.—Country about Council Bluffs.—High price of Provisions.—Mormon Speculations.—Trade among Emigrants.—Organization of Companies.—Mormon Emigrants for Salt Lake.—General Character of the Emigrants.—Captain Turner's Company.—Preaching.—Crossing the Missouri.

### START FOR CALIFORNIA—OUTFIT—MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

April 1st, 1850.—Early in the morning I took leave of home, and with somewhat anxious forebodings traveled to Savanna, a small town and steamboat landing on the Mississippi river, thirty-five miles below Galena, Illinois. I was aware that I had now undertaken a long, wearisome, and hazardous journey; that two or three years must, in all probability, roll away before I could expect to return, if life and health were spared.

I however made an effort to drive all gloomy thoughts from my mind, and to set my face with determined resolution towards the West. My associates were nine in number. Our conveyance was two wagons, with seven horses; a team by no means sufficient for the undertaking. There should have been twelve horses to a company as numerous as ours. A less team might suffice, if travelers knew what kinds and quantities of baggage to take on board. It is not necessary to start for California with any surplus bedding or clothing; it makes heft and especially bulk, is generally thrown away on the road, and if not, is seldom needed after you arrive there. Two blankets, one suit of clothing, made of strong cloth, an extra shirt or two, and an extra pair of shoes and hose, is a sufficient outfit as to bedding and clothing. To every ten men, there ought to be a cloth tent, twelve feet square. If, in addition to these, you have a few dishes, and simple cooking tools, and provisions for each person sufficient to last one hundred days after leaving Council Bluffs, you will be prepared to go to the gold region without going through the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

#### COMPANIES OF FIFTY PERSONS RECOMMENDED.

I would also recommend that men go in companies of fifty or more, as it makes easy the duty of standing on guard. Each individual ought to be armed with either a rifle or revolver. It is small parties, from five to twenty, and those who are badly armed, that have been pillaged or massacred by the savages.

As to the kind of team requisite, I think it makes but little difference whether oxen, cows, horses, or

mules are used, to draw the wagons; but it is indispensably necessary, that every animal be in good working condition when it leaves the Bluffs. Some companies have gone through with pack horses or mules. I think, however, that there ought to be at least one wagon to every twenty-five men, to serve as a hospital or conveyance for the sick, in case of necessity.

We this day crossed the Mississippi, on a flat boat, to the town of Sibula, on the Iowa side of the river. We here pitched our tent for the remainder of the day and night, and commenced cooking our own food, and trying the experiment of a camp life. Some one observed that it is April fool's day, and that we might yet find ourselves embarked on a foolish expedition. Sibula is sixteen hundred miles above New Orleans, and yet the majestic Father of rivers is here more than a mile broad, with a deep and strong current, moving three or four miles per hour. Distance, traveled ten miles.

#### A RETURNED CALIFORNIAN.

April 2d.—Started about noon, and moved on upon a very muddy road about four hours, and encamped near a small creek. A rain came on, which continued through the night, and our company remained in camp. As to myself, I put up at the house of an acquaintance in the vicinity. A returned Californian, by the name of Pope, arrived this night at home, in this neighborhood. We understood that he had made quite a fortune, but we did not learn the amount. This intelligence was cheering to our travelers. Distance traveled, ten miles.

April 3d.—Remained in camp.

## TIPTON.

April 4th.—Moved on to within four miles of Springfield, Jackson county, Iowa, and encamped by the side of a creek, in an open, rolling prairie.

April 5th.—Encamped in a grove surrounded by a splendid prairie country. Distance, fifteen miles.

April 6th.—Encamped in an uninhabited house. Here we found good stabling and other accommodations. The owner had started for the gold region.

April 7th.—Eight miles, brought us to Tipton, the county seat of Cedar county. It has a court-house, and is a small but thriving village, standing on prairie land, one mile east of a large grove. It being Sunday, our company concluded to encamp in the vicinity through the remainder of the day. I stayed in the town, and addressed a large audience at the court-house in the evening. Distance, eight miles.

## STATE OF IOWA.

April 8th.—Early in the morning I started to find our company, but did not succeed; and after three hours' fruitless exertion, fortunately came across a neighbor from Savanna, bound to California, who thought I had better proceed with him as far as Iowa City, and there wait or look for my company. I did so. We encamped in a tent, near a tavern. Thus far, through the state of Iowa, we find the country thinly settled, but the soil is fertile, the water good, and there is a tolerable supply of timber. It will ultimately be a rich and populous country. The land is high and rolling. Distance, twenty miles.



## LOST FROM MY COMPANY.

April 9th.—At nine o'clock, arrived at Iowa City, the capital of the state. I found nothing of my company, but concluded to wait for it. The neighbor, with whom I had traveled, went on. Happily for me, about noon, our company arrived. I found they had made diligent search for me, as well as I for them, before leaving Tipton, and had arrived at the conclusion that I must have gone forward. They then started, and as it happened, took the south, whilst we took the north road to the City. We find great numbers of emigrants at this place. Instances have been known on this journey, in which traveling companions, and even near relatives, fathers and their sons, have been separated from each other, and have never met until sometime after their arrival in California. You might as well search for a needle in a hay-mow, as for a person lost in such an endless throng. Distance, six miles.

## IOWA CITY, THE CAPITAL.

April 10th.—In this City, we learn that forage for teams is excessively scarce and dear farther on towards Council Bluffs, and grass has not as yet started upon the prairies. In view of these facts, we have concluded to tarry awhile in this place, until there is a better prospect as to feed. The teams that have already gone forward, it is said, have devoured all the hay and grain, and the road is now continually thronged with emigrants. Many companies are encamping here for the same reason as ourselves. We encamp in an uninhabited house, near the ferry across Iowa river, one hundred rods west of the city.

In this city there is a state-house, a large and splendid edifice, constructed of stone of a light color. It was built at the expense of the General Government, while this region of country was a territorial jurisdiction. There are also several splendid churches, and two or three thousand inhabitants. The buildings are all new, and the place has a thrifty appearance. In the vicinity is an extensive forest of oak timber, and an excellent farming country around. An immense number of teams are now daily crowding through the town. They are from the states forming the northern portion of the great Mississippi valley.

#### IOWA RIVER, &C.

Took a look at the Iowa river. It seems to be about sixty yards wide; at present, ten feet deep, and quite rapid. Small steamboats ascend the river to this place at high water.

We hear a report that from ten to twenty thousand emigrants are now at Council Bluffs, and that their teams are suffering for provender, and are living upon browse. These alarming reports have had the effect to allay, in some degree, the rage of the "gold fever;" many have become discouraged, and have here turned about, and set their faces towards home. An immense majority, however, are not so much affrighted, but that they are determined to proceed, at all hazards, even should they chance to "see the elephant," trunk and all, before they get to the land of gold. "A faint heart never wins the fair lady," is a proverb often repeated by these daring gold seekers.

April 13th.—Still encamped at the ferry. The weather is delightful. Iowa City is, at this time, a

place of great traffic; the emigrants will leave in this place a large amount of money, paid out for grain, provisions, and all sorts of merchandise.

The grass upon the prairies begins to look a little green, and we begin to be impatient to be again on our way.

We remained at our encampment, at the ferry, until the 18th instant.

April 18th.—Packed up our baggage, and proceeded on our long journey, through a country thinly settled, and but a small amount of timber; the land, however, seems to be fertile, and the soil of a dark color; the face of the land, rolling prairie. Distance, twenty-five miles.

#### NUMBER OF EMIGRANTS PASSED IOWA CITY.

April 19th.—When we left Iowa City, two thousand teams had crossed the ferries at that place. Three or four persons are about the average to a team, so we perceive that about six thousand travelers are now ahead of us upon this single road; and this road is but one, among scores of others, upon which emigrants are now passing along, and wending their way towards the golden region of California. We passed “Marengo,” a name famous in the history of battles. It is a very small village, though named after the bloody field where “Napoleon the Great,” achieved one of his greatest triumphs over the Austrians. Distance, thirty miles.

April 20th.—The road is found to be extremely good, running through vast tracts of uninhabited, though fertile lands. Timber becomes more scarce as we proceed. Distance, thirty miles.

## NEWTON, JASPER COUNTY.

April 21st.—Passed through a small place called Newton, the county seat of Jasper county, named, suppose, in honor of Sergeants Jasper and Newton, the bravest of the brave, and who served under General Marion in the war of the Revolution. Distance, eighteen miles.

## QUARREL AT SKUNK RIVER—FORT DESMOINES.

April 22d.—Found several miles of the worst possible traveling upon the marshy bottom lands, bordering Skunk river. We crossed this narrow and deep stream, at a ferry, with the owner of which a part of our company and several others, had a loud quarrel, on account of the extortionary price charged for ferriage; some physical force was used, some bowie knives and pistols displayed, and great threatenings were made, but no blood was shed. Distance, sixteen miles.

April 23d.—Arrived at old Fort Desmoines about noon, and crossed the Desmoines river, which at this place is two hundred yards wide, and extremely rapid, the water being high. There is here an old frontier fort, belonging to the United States, not now occupied as a garrison. Here is a fine flourishing town, of one thousand inhabitants, or thereabouts, and a new court-house, in which I gave a lecture in the evening. Distance, fourteen miles.

April 24th.—Continued our course over wide prairies, until we crossed a small river with high steep banks, and encamped on the margin of the stream, at Brown's ford, in a thick grove of large oak trees. Distance, thirty miles.

April 25th.—Encamped in a small grove, surrounded by an immense prairie. Distance, twenty-five miles.

April 26th.—Encamped on the East fork of the river Nodaway. We cross three forks of this stream. They are all fordable. Distance, twenty miles.

#### SCARCITY OF TIMBER IN WESTERN IOWA.

April 27th.—All this western part of Iowa seems remarkably destitute of timber. The soil is in all places fertile, and covered with luxuriant grass. I believe there are ten thousand acres of prairie, to one acre of timber, in all the region through which we have passed since leaving Iowa City.

At some future day, rail roads will doubtless cross this immense natural meadow, on which building materials may be transported, and this vast solitude become thronged with inhabitants. Distance, thirty miles.

#### FONDNESS FOR TITLES.

April 28th.—Traveled a part of the day, and passed a company of emigrants in a grove, where a preacher was addressing a small congregation of travelers. I observe that an unusual number of the emigrants are professional men. We have an abundance of preachers of all denominations, and crowds of learned counselors in law; whilst almost every tenth man has the title of doctor. It has been remarked by some foreign traveler in America, that the people of the United States are peculiarly fond of titles. On this road, almost every man has a title of some kind. We have any amount of generals, colonels, majors, captains, judges, squires, &c., &c. The great number of professional



men, enlisted in this expedition, would seem to argue that professional labors are not well rewarded in the United States, or perhaps, that the ranks of all the professions are too much crowded.

About noon, we arrived at a beautiful and extensive grove of second growth hickory trees, thickly covering the sides of a valley, through which runs a small stream of water. Many hundred emigrants were resting here. It was the first day of the week; there was no preaching, but I gave, by request, a lecture on philosophy; the audience sitting or standing around a blazing camp fire. Distance, fifteen miles.

#### INSCRIPTIONS ON TREES, BONES &C.

April 29th.—In every grove, through which we have passed, we see a vast number of names inscribed on the bark of trees. They are the names of emigrants who traveled this road last year, or who have preceded us this. The inscriptions are made in various ways; sometimes cut in the bark, but more frequently the bark is peeled off, and the name, date and residence, written with red chalk, black lead, &c.

Often we see a large number of names, forming a company, written with ink on pasteboard, and nailed to a tree. A folio might be filled with these fleeting memorials. Names are also written upon almost every bone, or horn, of deer, elk or buffalo, that lies bleaching by the way-side. Among the thousands, I now and then see the name of some person with whom I have been acquainted, and such an incident often recalls to mind agreeable recollections of the past. After leaving the Hickory grove, we found the country entirely des-



titute of timber, and encamped at night in the wide, open prairie. Distance, thirty miles.

#### MORMON SETTLEMENTS.

April 30th.—In the course of the day, passed some scattering settlements of Mormons, and just before sunset, arrived upon the bluffs that skirt the northern limits of the wide bottom lands on the Missouri river. The river seems still to be ten or twelve miles distant, but its serpentine course can be traced by the strip of light green cottonwood trees that fringe the banks. We encamped on the summit of the bluff. Distance, thirty miles.

#### KANESVILLE, A MORMON TOWN—EMIGRANTS.

May 1st.—Took a northerly course along the high prairie near the bluff, and arrived about noon at the town of Kaneshville, a village of one hundred houses. It is the center of a large settlement of Mormons. This town, and the country around, is used by the Mormons as a rallying point, or half-way place, where they commonly reside, a longer or shorter time, preparatory to going on to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, which is at present the grand rendezvous of this singular and migratory race.

Kaneshville is styled by the Mormons, "the second Presidency," Salt Lake being the "first." In this vicinity we find innumerable emigrants encamped, whose countless tents whiten all the surrounding country.

In this place, trade is extremely brisk at present. A great number of emigrants are here, whose courage has not utterly failed, and they are putting up their

teams, provisions, &c., at auction, by means of which to raise what money they can, and return home.

In the afternoon, we traveled across the smooth level bottom of the Missouri, nine miles broad, and encamped near the northern bank of the river, in a thick grove of timber, a little to the north of the ferry at Trader's Point.

#### COUNTRY ABOUT COUNCIL BLUFFS.

May 2d.—I took a stroll through the neighborhood. In the vicinity are two small villages, one at Traders Point, on the river, and the other on the Missouri bottom, four miles north of the first. Traders' Point is a steamboat landing, and is eight hundred miles from St. Louis, by the course of the river; the inhabitants partly Mormons. The other village is an irregular assemblage of one hundred or more log huts, and inhabited wholly by Mormons.

On these fertile river bottom lands, are many fine farms improved by Mormons. This is the region where the followers of Joe Smith first took refuge, when they were expelled from Illinois.

May 3d.—Council Bluffs is the name given to a tract of country in this quarter; of indefinite extent in the state of Iowa, and county of Potawatamic inhabited at present principally by Mormons, who however, are not to be regarded as permanent settlers.

#### HIGH PRICE OF PROVISIONS.

May 4th.—It is still too early in the season to start off upon the Plains, vegetation being backward. Many thousands are here encamped, waiting for the grass to attain a longer growth. All the country around

is dotted with their tents, from many of which the "stars and stripes" are floating to the breeze, which gives the whole landscape the appearance of a large military encampment. Grain for the teams is scarce and dear; Indian corn being sold at three dollars per bushel. Steamboats from below, are anxiously expected with supplies.

#### MORMON SPECULATIONS.

May 5th.—In various ways, the Mormons are making petty speculations by trading with the emigrants. Every traveler is made to believe that a Mormon "guide book" and a pair of goggles are indispensable requisites upon the road. The guide book is a pamphlet of five or six leaves, and might have cost the proprietor three cents per copy. Thousands of these are sold, at prices ranging from fifty cents to two dollars each; and the goggles, in still greater numbers, are sold at fifty cents per pair, and neither of these articles were of the least service in crossing the plains.

The goggles were a miserable piece of home-made manufacture—the eyes of common window glass, fastened into a pair of "leathern spectacles." They might have cost the manufacturer six cents per pair.

I mention these circumstances to show the tact of these "latter day Saints," (as they style themselves,) at petty speculations; they may fairly challenge the far-famed venders of "wooden nutmegs" and "horn flints."

A man in our company was severely injured by the bursting of a rifle, nearly putting out his eyes.

May 6th.—Our company removed to a grove, two miles below the ferry, for the purpose of finding better

grass. Two Mackinaw boats, heavily laden with buffalo robes, touched here to-day, on their way down from the Yellow Stone river, and the upper Missouri.

May 7th.—Several steamboats have arrived with heavy freights of provender and provisions, and the prices of these articles have been greatly reduced.

#### TRADE AMONG EMIGRANTS.

May 7th.—Many of the emigrants have traveled to this place by water, bringing with them their clothing and provisions, also money, with which to purchase teams. This makes a good market for this species of property. They purchase of those who have concluded to “back out” and return home, and these are not a few. There is a constant trade in the line of swapping wagons and teams. One man gets tired of his ox team, and exchanges it for horses; another gets tired of horses, and swaps them for oxen.

#### ORGANIZATION OF COMPANIES.

May 9th.—The host of emigrants who are now encamped in this vicinity, are persons who have rushed together from every point of the compass; in general total strangers to each other, forming, upon the whole a heterogeneous mass. They are now busily engaged in trying to arrange these discordant materials, by forming themselves into companies, averaging about thirty teams to each, and four persons to a team.

#### MORMON EMIGRANTS FOR SALT LAKE.

May 10th.—In addition to all the California emigrants, we learn that eight hundred Mormon teams are about starting from this vicinity for Salt Lake. Th

inquiry is daily made, whether it be possible to subsist upon the Plains such immense numbers of animals, as indications clearly show are intended to be taken through the coming season.

#### GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE EMIGRANTS.

The crowds, for a general rule, now congregated about the Bluffs, are a merry and thoughtless set of fellows, regardless of danger, and reckless of consequences. Card playing is almost constantly going on, at nearly every tent, and in the evenings the air resounds with jovial songs, and the ringing of violins, and all sorts of musical instruments. The amount of profane language is surprising, and from a general view, one might come to the conclusion that a strict search had been made, and that all the profane swearers in the Union had been sought out and brought together upon this expedition; still, on a closer investigation, you might find many moral and intelligent men who would do honor to any society, but thousands seem to tax their inventive powers in originating new forms of vulgar or blasphemous language.

#### CAPTAIN TURNER'S COMPANY.

May 11th.—We joined ourselves to a company, called the "Western Enterprise," commanded by Captain G. L. Turner, and encamped for the present on Mosquito creek. The company consists of forty wagons, and about one hundred and forty men and four women. Our company was organised in regular and fine order. The officers consisted of one captain, four lieutenants, one camp-master, one wagon-master, and a judicial committee, to decide on all causes of com-



plaint that might arise on the road, whether civil or criminal. The officers also appointed a chaplain. The plan of this organization, with the names of all belonging to it attached, together with a brief code of laws, was handsomely printed, in hand-bill form, and two or three copies distributed to each member. We now considered ourselves as being prepared for war, or any other emergency likely to arise, and we began to be impatient for orders to strike our tents, and commence our hazardous march.

#### PREACHING.

May 12th.—The chaplain gave a discourse in the morning; about forty men and three women composed the audience. The meeting was in the centre of the encampment, in the open air. A considerable number, however, stayed in their tents; playing cards, during the exercises, and others continued their work, within a few yards of the preacher's stand. These facts gave us a foretaste of California morals and religion.

#### CROSSING THE MISSOURI.

May 13th.—The company had orders to pull up stakes, and move down to the river and commence crossing. The whole company passed over at Traders' Point, in the course of twenty-four hours. Doctor Clark, of Jackson county, Iowa, is the principal owner and manager of this ferry, and we are under obligations to him for his exertions to accommodate us. This ferry is in the most direct route for all who travel by way of Council Bluffs.

The Missouri is a tremendous stream. The water is almost thick with clay, giving it a whitish appearance.



It is full of eddies and whirlpools, and the boiling torrent rushes along with amazing rapidity, bearing in its bed a vast quantity of water from the Rocky Mountains to the Mississippi. The Missouri, at this place, is half a mile in width, and very deep. The geographical student will recollect that this is one of the longest rivers on our globe. Steamboats ascend the stream more than two thousand miles above Council Bluffs, through a region now uninhabited, except by Indians; but when a civilized population shall take their place, then this mighty river will become one of the greatest channels of commerce. Distance, from Illinois to Council Bluffs, four hundred miles.

## CHAPTER II.

Village and Mission-house—Omahas.—Advice of the Indian Agent.—Elkhorn river—Indian train.—Platte or Nebraska river.—Camp regulations.—Preaching in camp.—Loup Fork.—Crossing the Loup Fork.—Terrific storm on the plain.—Appearance of our Company.—Prairie creek—Emigrant graves.—Signs of Buffalo.—A military training.—Game killed.—Saleratus—Prairie Dogs—Elk.—Procession—Doggerly—Fine location.—City of prairie Dogs—Alkaline waters.—Scenery of the Platte river.—Companies begin to scatter.—Lonely Ox—A Dog returning.—Stampede—Excitement.—Fine scenery—A singular animal.—A Buffalo killed—Dead Buffalo.—Junction of the Forks—Latitude given.—Sunday work—Hunting excitement.—Prickly pears.—Pacific railroad.—A singular little river.—Cholera ravages.—The lone tree.—Appearance of the Platt.—Ancient bluff ruins.—Natural curiosities.—Chimney rock.—Scott's bluff.—General view of the trains.—Alkaline waters—Diseases.—Fort Laramie—Sioux Indians.—Dangers of the Platte.—The new route.

May 14th.—Being all safely across the river, we move on two miles and encamp, in due form, posting sentinels at night. We are now in the Indian territory, have entered upon the Plains, and the campaign is fairly opened.

### VILLAGE AND MISSION HOUSE—OMAHAS.

May 15th.—On the west side of the river, a narrow bottom runs along, from which the bluff rises abruptly to the height of two or three hundred feet. Along this

bottom there is a scattering village, consisting of log huts and Indian lodges, the inhabitants mostly Indians, with a few French traders. Here, also, is an United States' Indian agency. On a high, smooth swell of land, to the west of the village, is a Missionary establishment. The main building makes a handsome appearance. At the Mission, a school is kept, in which the children of the natives are taught, whenever they can be induced to attend school. There are two tribes of Indians who inhabit this vicinity, viz: the Pawnees and Omahas. The Government is trying to introduce agricultural improvements among them.

We saw some white men to-day, with breaking teams and plows, going west, who informed us they were going out to break prairie for the Omahas. They also said that Government paid them for their labor. Crowds of half-naked Indians now constantly throng us, begging for food and watching for opportunities to pilfer.

#### ADVICE OF THE INDIAN AGENT.

The Indian agent advises all emigrants to have no dealings or intimacy with the Indians, but keep them at a distance from our camp and wagons. If this advice had been followed, an immense amount of trouble would have been prevented. Contrary to this advice, the emigrants are constantly feeding these beggars, and making them presents of various trinkets. The cause of this seeming charity, on the part of the travelers, is not love or benevolence, towards the natives, but rather fear of their enmity. But this is not the proper course to pursue to gain the friendship of the Indians.

In the afternoon, we moved on over a beautiful green, rolling prairie, and encamped. Distance, six miles.

May 16th.—The country similar in appearance to that which we passed yesterday.

#### ELKHORN RIVER—INDIAN TRAIN.

In the afternoon, arrived at Elkhorn river, about eighty yards wide, and four or five feet in depth. It is a fine stream, running from north to south, and is a tributary of the Platte or Nebraska. We here witnessed a novel scene. While our own company and several others were crammed into the narrow space between the river and the bluffs, about an hundred Indians and squaws, with pack mules, came down to the crossing. Their loading was Indian corn, which they informed us, by signs, they were going to plant. It was a motley crowd, consisting of six or eight hundred white men and women, Indians and squaws. One Indian had a handsome sword, with steel scabbard, of which he seemed very proud, and which he carried by slinging it over his shoulder. He gave us to understand that he was a man of authority, by frequently repeating the only English he could speak, "me Pawnee chief," at the same time pointing to his own person. He also had a written paper, made out by a company that was ahead of us, certifying that the bearer is a chief, and a good friend to white men, and advising us to make him some presents, as they had done. We did so. The consequence was, that the chief, and a score or two of his tribe, kept company with us a day or two, and lived sumptuously upon our bounty. We were not sorry when they departed. The squaws, as usual with

Indians, performed all the labor; unloaded and reloaded the mules, and drove the mules across the ford. The squaws plunged into the river, sometimes wading and sometimes swimming, often diving and popping out again. They played and splashed about in the water, and evidently enjoyed themselves like a flock of ducks. The Indians rode leisurely in the ferry boat, taking along the corn. Our train went across, and finding good grass near the opposite bank, encamped for the night, posting our sentinels in military style. Distance, fifteen miles.

#### PLATTE OR NEBRASKA RIVER.

May 17th.—Moved on, and in the course of the day arrived on the banks of the Platte. It is the great western tributary of the Missouri, and discharges itself into that river, below Council Bluffs. It heads in the Rocky Mountains, and its length must exceed one thousand miles. The stream, at this place, is about two miles wide, and is still more rapid than the Missouri. The water is exceedingly muddy, and rushes along amidst innumerable sand-bars and small green islands, which are thickly covered with a growth of whitewood and willow bushes. A narrow strip of similar trees fringe the banks of the river. Distance, twenty-five miles.

May 18th.—The Platte bottom seems to be of great width, at least twenty miles. The road is now dry and runs along near the river—is smooth and level, and as good a carriage-way as can be well conceived. We keep a regular guard every night, and as yet maintain strict discipline, and the dignity of our laws in the company. This desirable state of affairs did not long continue.



## CAMP REGULATIONS.

When the camp-master designates the ground on which we are to encamp at night, the wagons are arranged in the form of a hollow-square, the tents being pitched in spaces between the wagons. The horses are then turned loose to graze until dark, when they are taken up and fastened, either to the wagons or to stakes driven into the ground, near the center of the encampment. Numerous fires are then built, with such fuel as can be obtained, with which to cook. Candles are lighted in the tents; small bands of music begin to play; songs are sung in various quarters; stories are told, and all try to entertain themselves in the best way they can.

Indian visitors are still numerous, and we have become quite sick of their company. Many among them set up claims to distinction, by saying "me Pawnee chief." They seem to have a great fondness for titles, as well as their pale-faced brethren from the States. Distance, thirty miles.

## PREACHING IN CAMP.

May 19th—Sunday.—Our company lay by through the day, and some persons belonging to it observed the Sabbath. I mention this, because it was the last Sunday to which I saw much respect paid, on the route to California. A discourse was preached, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, to an audience consisting of a number of white men, and twenty-three half naked Indians and squaws. The natives seemed to pay good attention, although they understood nothing that was said. In the night we had a storm of rain, thunder and lightning, accompanied by a heavy gale of wind.

## LOUP FORK.

May 20th.—Continued our march in sight of the river until near sundown, when we arrived at the river called the Loup Fork, the ferry across which is but a few miles from its entrance into the Platte, of which stream it is the principal northern tributary. The color of the water is like that of the Platte and the Missouri, and is also like those streams, exceedingly rapid, and about three hundred yards wide at this crossing. We encamp for the night in the skirts of a narrow grove upon the eastern shore. No Indians have visited us to-day. The plains begin to assume a robe of lively green; the trees are clothed in verdant foliage; the view of the surrounding landscape is enchanting. I have always been a profound admirer of Nature's works. Her mountains, rocks and plains, to me are always beautiful; but her scenery amidst these vast solitudes is truly sublime. The blue horizon shuts down upon, and seems to mingle with, the bright level green of the boundless prairie. The scenery, as we move along, is constantly varying, but is at all times grand and romantic. Distance, twenty-five miles.

## CROSSING THE LOUP FORK.

May 21st.—Crossed our whole company, of forty wagons, over in one small ferry boat, in six hours. I think no company could have done better. Our men were very spirited; long ropes were attached to the boat, and the men wading into the water, one hundred yards or so, pulled the boat through with great rapidity. The horses were made to swim the rushing tide, the velocity of which took them down a considerable

distance, in an oblique direction. Along the western shore of this stream, at this place, is a wide beach of beautiful white sand, that would be valuable for various purposes, if situated in an inhabited country. We encamped not far from the ferry. Distance, two miles.

#### TERRIFIC STORM ON THE PLAIN.

May 22d.—Continued our route, following up the western shore of the Loup Fork. Our hunters saw droves of elk and antelope, but killed none. Some of our men are constantly out, scouring the plains in search of game, but have had no success as yet. We came to camp upon a bench of land, about fifteen feet higher than the level of the stream. During the night we were visited by a tremendous tempest, such an one as no person in our company had ever seen previously. The storm raged with unceasing fury, from ten at night until four in the morning—six long hours. The heavens seemed on fire, so continuous was the lightning's blaze. Crashes of thunder followed each other in quick succession, shaking the earth and rolling in terrific grandeur over the boundless plain. The elements were all in arms, and seemed waging a war of unsparing vengeance against all who were exposed to their attack. Both rain and hail fell in frightful quantities. A mixture of icy pebbles and water, at one time covered the ground to the depth of six inches. The wind blew a perfect hurricane, and every tent was blown down. As to myself, after our tent was blown away, I obtained admission into a covered wagon, where I sat up in one corner, until the break of day, about which time the storm subsided. In the morning, our splendid encamp-

ment made a most miserable appearance. It looked some as though we had been defeated in a battle with the Indians. At this time, our company was so resolute in obeying orders and maintaining discipline, that through the whole of the tempest, the guards took their regular tours of duty, the sentinels standing two hours at a time. In the midst of the storm, while thunders rolled, hail rattled, and the wind howled, our hardy sentinels were out, in their water-proof coats, merrily singing out "twelve o'clock, and all is well!" One of them, with greater propriety, sung out, "two o'clock, and all is wet!" Distance, twenty miles.

May 23d.—On examination, it was found that the storm of the past night had wet nearly all the bedding and clothing in the company; also, the dried fruits; and that a considerable amount of flour had received damage. It was found expedient to lie by during the day, for the purpose of drying clothing and provisions. The sky was clear, and weather warm. All hands fell at work, and by sunset we had, in a good degree, repaired the disasters of the previous night.

#### APPEARANCE OF OUR COMPANY.

May 24th.—We took an early start, moving along the grassy plain. Our company, alone, forms quite an imposing procession. Our forty wagons, from several of which the stars and stripes are displayed, generally stretch about a mile in length. There are a considerable number on horseback, intermixed with the wagons, besides which, fifty or more are scattered along each side of the way, and abreast of the teams. We have the appearance of quite a formidable little army;

but our company is only one among hundreds of similar ones, at this time upon the march through this wide domain.

Game in plenty was seen to-day, but none obtained. The elk are remarkably shy. We encamped where no fuel was to be found except green willows, a very poor fire-wood. By its aid, we contrived to boil our tea and cook our supper. Buffalo chips, (politely so called,) are used in case of necessity for fuel, but in consequence of the late storm, this article is yet too wet to burn. Distance, twenty-five miles.

#### PRAIRIE CREEK—EMIGRANT GRAVES.

May 25th.—Towards noon, our road turned a little to the left, leaving the Loup Fork, and taking a direction towards the Platte. We soon ascended a bluff of moderate elevation, and for several miles traveled over a high rolling prairie of great fertility and beauty, which is the dividing ridge between the two rivers. We then descended upon the broad bottom of the Platte river. Crossed a very ugly dead stream, called Prairie creek; many wagons stuck fast in the mud, and had to be drawn out with ropes, thirty or forty men attaching themselves to a strong rope, the end of which was made fast to the forward end of the wagon tongue, thus assisting the horses to get through a quagmire, and ascend a steep bank, fifteen or twenty feet high. On the bank of this creek were two graves of last year's emigrants. The names of the persons buried, were Burt and Kellogg. Their names were cut on narrow pieces of pine board, and placed at the head of the graves. Here, far from their friends and homes, they repose in their last sleep,



surrounded by vast solitudes, their funeral dirge being sung by the whistling blasts that sweep the boundless plain. There is, to most minds, something appalling in the thought of being buried in such a cemetery, but in reality it makes but little difference whether our final resting place be in the solitary desert, or among the crowded vaults of the city. In the grave we shall be alone, although we may lie in the midst of thousands.

#### SIGNS OF BUFFALO.

We see abundant signs of buffalo, in the form of tracks, horns and chips. Our hunters are becoming impatient to see some of these animals, as we all begin to have a keen appetite for fresh meat. A man from our train, who was out on horseback to the south of the road, thinks he saw an hundred thousand prairie dogs, many square miles being covered with their burrows.

At our encampment we find no fuel except dry weeds and buffalo chips. We are about equi-distant between the Platte and the Loup Fork. At ten in the evening we had a violent gale of wind. Distance, twenty-five miles.

#### A MILITARY TRAINING.

May 26th—Sunday.—Crossed a deep, muddy stream, on a kind of floating bridge, made of rotten logs and green willow bushes. We travel only a part of this day, encamping at one o'clock. We stop thus early, not because it is the Sabbath, but to attend to affairs of various kinds.

The company concluded that a little military training might be of service to us. The captain ordered the whole to parade with loaded arms. This order being

promptly executed, the company was divided in due form into platoons and sections. Some evolutions were performed, in a style which indicated that we were all raw recruits, and not very thoroughly drilled in the schools of either Steuben or Scott. A target was set up, at which the company discharged several rounds, firing by platoons. The target, a piece of wide board, was riddled in a most shocking manner, showing what would have been the fate of an Indian had he been in the same place. At this time our men had a great zeal in keeping the whole company together, and in having the laws strictly observed.

A splendid oil-cloth tent was purchased by contribution. This was each night set up near the center of the encampment for a rendezvous, where all those detailed for the guard carried their blankets and lodged.

#### GAME KILLED.

Two young antelopes were killed by our hunters to-day—some of us got a taste, and others none at all. A company which was encamped near ours, killed a buffalo. I saw them engaged in the operation of jerking some of the beef. I got of them a small piece of meat thus prepared, and ate it with a very good relish.

Another hard storm of rain, with some hail, accompanied by a heavy gale of wind. It happened about the middle of the night. Two horses in our encampment were slightly injured by lightning. Distance, fifteen miles.

#### SALERATUS—PRAIRIE DOGS—ELK.

May 27th.—Started the train at seven o'clock, and at noon arrived on the banks of the Platte, the road

muddy, but level as a floor. Grass in abundance, but no wood or timber in sight. Numerous trains besides our own are now constantly in view ; the crowd thickens as we proceed, at every step, and will seemingly soon become an almost unbroken procession. To-day we observe, for the first time, large tracts of land covered with saleratus, extensive spots of ground being white like snow with this substance. Saw another emigrant graveyard, where many a weary pilgrim, with all his high hopes of worldly wealth, lies buried by the side of the wide rushing and solitary Platte.

To-day we have passed through an immense city of prairie dogs ; great numbers of them came out of their burrows, and with their sharp voices yelped or barked, by way of saluting our bold company, which thus, without license, invaded their peaceful dominions. Some of our men gave chase to a buffalo, without success. Drove of elk, and packs of wolves were seen out upon the bluffs, to the north of the road. Four hunters out on horseback came up near a drove of elk. The horsemen dismounted, leaving their horses to graze without being tied. Creeping around a little hillock, the hunters simultaneously discharged their rifles. The drove of elk fled with precipitation. The horses partaking of the excitement, started at full speed, following the elk, and were soon beyond the reach of their riders. A party of horsemen from the trains pursued the fugitives, which they succeeded in capturing, though they found them twenty or thirty miles from the road.

We encamp two miles from the Platte, surrounded by a vast level green. No timber in sight. Distance, twenty-five miles.

## PROCESSION—DOGGERY—FINE LOCATION.

May 28th.—At eleven o'clock in the morning, we came again to the banks of the Platte river, which at this place is destitute of timber on both sides. This gives us an extensive view of the bottom lands on the southern shore, through which runs the road of all emigrants that start from all the numerous points on the Missouri river below the mouth of the Platte. Casting my eye across the river, I beheld an imposing spectacle. I saw an interminable and unbroken line of covered wagons, extending both up and down the river as far as sight could reach. We halted two hours at this place; the line of carriages on the southern shore continued to move on, and yet we saw no end. We begin to have ocular proof that an army is on the march to California, covering the road like that of Napoleon's, when moving upon the great road of Kaluga towards Moscow.

Our hunters saw a drove of buffalo, amounting to an hundred or more, but killed none. Along here are numerous carcasses of these huge animals scattered over the plain, that seem to have been killed, or to have died natural deaths the present season, decomposition not having as yet commenced.

During this day we passed through and by several extensive "doggeries." By the term "doggerly," I do not mean anything like those numerous establishments in the States which bear that appropriate title, in which packs of noisy, two-legged puppies are daily and nightly kenneled. By the word doggerly, I mean a level and rather low tract of land, several miles square, having a little hillock every ten or fifteen feet, each

hillock being the habitation of a family of little animals called "prairie dogs," a creature, however, peculiar to itself, and which has, upon the whole, but little resemblance to a dog. They seem to be a kind of intermediate link between a rat and grey squirrel, at the same time possessing some faint characteristics of a small puppy. They subsist upon grass. Instinct has taught them the size of a farm necessary for the support of a family. Their habitations are very regularly distant from each other—about fifteen feet. A family, however, does not confine itself to any particular spot, on which to obtain its food, but ranges freely over the whole city and the adjacent lands. These creatures will come out of their burrows by thousands, and standing perfectly erect on their hind feet, impudently bark with their sharp voices at the passing multitudes. We shot a number of these animals, and caught one alive, and therefore had a good opportunity for examination.

We encamp this evening in a spot of singular beauty. It is an extensive lawn, perfectly level, covered with the richest grass, thick, and six or eight inches high. The whole is nearly encircled by a light green strip of cotton-wood trees that fringe the banks of Elm Creek. Singing birds fill the air with the wild melody of their notes. Distance, twenty-five miles.

#### CITY OF PRAIRIE DOGS—ALKALINE WATERS.

May 29th.—Our road this morning takes its way through the center of the bottom, and several miles distant from the river, which at this place makes a great bend to the south. About noon came again to the bank of the Platte, and saw on the other side the



same endless train of covered wagons. The river at this place seems to be about two miles in width, very shallow, and exceedingly rapid, and like the Missouri, of a milky color, being almost thick with clay.

In the afternoon our road made another wide deviation from the river. The level bottom land, reckoning that lying on both sides of the Platte, is twenty or thirty miles in width. We encamp about half-way between the river and the northern bluff, and in the suburbs of an immense city of prairie dogs, whose conical habitations cover the country as far as our sight extends to the north. The earth around us is covered in patches with saleratus, this substance, in many instances, lying in beds two or three inches in depth, and resembling heaps of flour, or white ashes. By digging a few feet, we found abundance of water, but its taste was very disagreeable, as it all held in solution a large quantity of alkali. We did not at this time perceive any ill effects from its use, either to man or beast. Distance, twenty-four miles.

#### SCENERY OF THE PLATTE RIVER.

May 30th.—About nine in the morning we arrived again upon the bank of the river, which we followed until noon, being here destitute of timber on both sides. This circumstance gives us a fine opportunity of contemplating the peculiarities of this wonderful stream. It is, indeed, an extraordinary river. Wherever we have seen it, the breadth seems to be about two miles. It is shallow in nearly all places, the depth ranging from one to four feet. I think a man might wade across in almost any place; but the experiment would be

attended with great fatigue and some danger, on account of the nature of the bed, which is composed entirely of quicksand. If you stand still in the stream, you find yourself rapidly sinking, and the sand heaping up around you. The swift current reaches in all places entirely from shore to shore, there being no points of land, as in other rivers, to form eddies. The banks are flat and low, and there are innumerable small sandy islands, thickly covered with small green bushes. The bed of the river is a regularly inclined plane, extending from the Rocky Mountains to where it discharges itself into the river Missouri. The velocity of the stream cannot be less than ten or twelve miles per hour.

Timber is now daily becoming more scarce, little being found even on the brink of the river or the islands. A doctor from our company to-day rode back northward to the bluffs, which he ascended, and went over and among the hills for several miles. He says the scenery was so singular and romantic as amply to repay him for the fatigue of his day's journey. The whole country to the north of the bluffs, as far as he could see, was piled up in sharp conical peaks, of fantastic forms and endless variety. Distance, sixteen miles.

#### COMPANIES BEGIN TO SCATTER.

May 31st.—About this time our company, called "The Western Enterprise Company," began to break in pieces. At one time ten wagons went on, leaving the rest behind. They were determined upon traveling with greater rapidity than the officers of the company thought advisable. Various causes of complaint, from time to time arose; small parties began to detach them-

selves, and before we arrived at Fort Laramie, not more than ten teams, originally belonging to Capt. Turner's train, remained. Many men argued, that the smaller the company the better. This doctrine may be correct in reference to those selfish, unreasonable beings, who have not virtue or sense sufficient to enable them to know when they are doing well, and are well treated by others. And the vast number of such creatures now upon this road, is what makes all the real difficulty that exists in traveling in a strong and efficient company. It is necessary to guard the camp and stock every night, and where there are but few to perform this duty, their rest must be constantly disturbed.

There are also some dangerous streams to cross, and some difficult places in the road; in all such cases numbers greatly lessen the danger and delay. In addition to all these considerations, it is quite possible to be attacked by Indians, in such force that an hundred men, well armed, may be none too many to defend themselves to advantage. Thus our bond of union, which was to hold us together through the journey, proved to be a rope of sand. We broke in fragments, and other companies shared the same fate.

#### A LONELY OX—A DOG RETURNING.

The principal part of this day our road lies quite near the river, which gives us further opportunities of admiring the romantic beauties of this wild stream, with its verdant isles and rushing waters.

In the afternoon, passed a point where for the first time we find the bluffs extending down to the bank of the river. These bluffs consist of a multitude of hills of white sand, of perhaps two hundred feet elevation,

over and among these the road winds for a mile or two, the wheeling of the worst kind. We then descended upon the bottom, which we here found low and wet, with numerous small lakes, or ponds, having no visible outlets.

In the afternoon, passed an ox lying on the prairie, not far from the road, very leisurely chewing his cud. He had been abandoned by some train, on account of being lame. Although thus deserted and alone, he nevertheless seemed to be in quite independent circumstances, having a plenty of good grass and water near at hand, with none to molest, or to compel him to drag the wearisome load along this tiresome way.

A large dog ran past us to-day, going eastward. I believe he had started for home, having seen enough of the "elephant" already to satisfy him. In this move I think the dog gave proof of a wise sagacity.—Distance, 25 miles.

#### A STAMPEDE—EXCITEMENT.

June 1st.—During the past night there happened a regular stampede of about two hundred head of oxen. They started about midnight from an encampment about half a mile to the west of ours. They took their course back towards the east, rushing past a few rods in the rear of our tents. Their thundering tramp awakened us as would an approaching earthquake. The cattle had been terribly frightened at something, and made a simultaneous start as though running for life. All attempts to stop their career were in vain. They continued their flight six or eight miles down the river, where they were found the next day on an island out in the middle of the stream. When a drove gets

upon a stampede in this manner, they will trample down men, tents, or any thing that comes in their way. A stampede is an exciting scene, though it not unfrequently proves a dangerous performance. On this occasion no essential damage was done.

#### FINE SCENERY—A SINGULAR ANIMAL.

We find the bluffs approximating each other, compressing the bottom to narrower limits. At noon we observed that the highlands, south of the river and extending along for many miles, presented an appearance of such picturesque beauty as to call forth expressions of admiration from every beholder. The appearance was like that of an infinite number of regular pyramids, sometimes standing in uniform ranges, and in other instances dispersed around in clumps, of a great variety as to sizes and forms.

One of our men killed a singular little animal, not quite as large as a common striped squirrel, with an unusually long tail like a rat, having at its extremity a tuft of white hair. The fore legs were only half an inch in length, whilst the hind legs were four inches long. It had two elastic sacks, or pouches, under the lower jaw; the probable use of which being to transport surplus provision, an appendage quite useful to a traveler in a region like this, where wide tracts of land are barren wastes.

#### A BUFFALO KILLED—DEAD BUFFALO.

Our hunters killed a buffalo and an antelope, so now we have fresh meat in abundance. We preferred the buffalo to stall-fed beef. These animals are amazingly numerous in this quarter. A part of our company



having been out upon the bluffs, report that they saw a thousand dead buffalo; they were lying in a deep valley surrounded by a steep bank. Their carcasses, with hair upon them, strewed the ground for a mile square. From the positions in which they lie, it is evident that they suffered some violent death. Some being thrown upon their backs, with their horns driven into the ground; others had their heads twisted under their bodies, &c. The most probable opinion is, that these animals lost their lives by the violence of a prairie fire, which is known to have passed along here towards the last of April. They were in the valley, which was covered with tall dry grass, in which it is probable they were surrounded by the fire and could not escape.

We passed a very large spring of clear water, though slightly tinctured with alkali. It boils up with force, discharging water sufficient to carry a grist-mill. A doctor who was out during the day upon a hunting party, says that he saw more than five thousand buffalo at a single observation. They were feeding like cattle in a pasture. In some instances, these animals appear quite tame, or fearless, and will not move until the hunters are within five rods of them, and will not run even when fired upon. It often takes several shots to bring a buffalo down. The one killed by our company to-day, received nine balls in different parts of his body before he fell. When attacked, they sometimes turn with fury upon their assailants. The one killed to-day is as heavy as a large ox, and some are much heavier than this.

## JUNCTION OF THE FORKS—LATITUDE GIVEN.

During the day we passed the junction of the south and north Forks of the Platte. We are now to follow up the northern bank of the north fork, which appears to be more than a mile broad. Both forks are of the same apparent size, just before they unite, and form the main Platte river. We here lose sight of the immense procession of emigrant teams on the south side of the river; they are to follow up, on the south side of the south fork eighty miles, before crossing it.

The junction of the two forks is in latitude forty-one degrees seven minutes North, and two thousand and seven hundred feet above the level of the sea—two thousand three hundred miles from the mouth of the Mississippi. Distance, eleven miles.

## SUNDAY WORK—HUNTING EXCITEMENT.

June 2d.—Sunday.—Lay by this day to rest, but there seems to be no opportunity for relaxation upon this journey. There is a great amount of labor to perform; much of this is postponed until the first day of the week, which day with us is often the most business day in the seven. All hands are busy in washing their clothing, changing their garments, cooking up food, baking bread, jerking buffalo meat, &c.

Since our good fortune in killing the antelope and buffalo, the excitement on the subject of the chase has become extreme. More than half the men are out scouring the plains in all directions in search of game. We hear the cracking of rifles at a distance, resembling the din of battle. A man belonging to our company waded through the North Fork and back again. It is

above a mile wide. He took an oblique direction, landing some distance below. He reports the average depth at about three feet, excessively rapid in all places. The bottom is composed of quicksand, full of holes, about two feet deep in the sand, into which he was continually plunging. He was quite weary on his return.

#### PRICKLY PEARS.

An immense number of teams in front and in the rear of us, are now in sight, and trains are constantly passing us as we have halted for the day. Two varieties of Cactus, (Prickly Pear,) grow here in abundance. Here I observed the variety you so often see cultivated in parlors, and another kind, far more beautiful, the plant assuming the form of a cluster of globes, with variegated colors.

#### PACIFIC RAILROAD.

June 3d.—From the Missouri river to Fort Laramie, we are constantly ascending an inclined plane, of uniform and gradual ascent, just the right grade for railroad operations. On this part of the route, a railway could be constructed with less labor than the same distance in any other part of the Union. Indeed, the road has already been graded by the hand of Nature. How long will our Government hesitate, and neglect to avail itself of such superlative advantages, in the construction of a thoroughfare which will bring the mineral treasures of California to the doors of the Capitol, and roll the vast tides of Asiatic commerce through the center of our states and territories? This subject ought to arouse our nation to immediate action, before the

current of trade becomes permanently fixed in some other direction. The profits of a railway to the Pacific coast, would soon refund the money expended in its construction. Besides which, such a road would be a stupendous monument to the enterprise and greatness of our Republic,—would be in keeping with the progressive spirit of the age, and would bind together the extremes of the Union with strong bands of iron.

Our course to-day is not far from the river, though we occasionally ascend the bluffs, and wind among the sand hills. Distance, twenty-six miles.

#### A SINGULAR LITTLE RIVER.

June 4th.—Crossed numerous creeks, the water containing but a slight proportion of alkali. In the afternoon, forded a singular and exceedingly lovely stream, called the North Bluff Fork. The stream was one hundred feet wide, the water very clear, and of a uniform depth of not more than six inches. The bed of the stream is composed of a very fine white sand, and felt as smooth to the feet as polished marble. Many persons took off their shoes and stockings, and waded this delightful little river. Distance, twenty miles.

#### CHOLERA RAVAGES.

I had intended to notice in my journal every grave and burying-place that we passed, but I have abandoned this part of my plan, and shall only mention those of persons who lost their lives in some unusual or violent manner. Graves are so numerous, that to notice them all, would make my narrative tedious.

From all I can learn, I think there has been more than one thousand emigrants buried upon the road to

California, during last year and the present season. Great numbers have been drowned in the rivers, many have been killed by the careless use of fire-arms; but the principal part have fallen victims to that fearful scourge, the cholera. In some instances, every person belonging to a wagon has died of the pestilence. Such carriages have been seen standing by the way, with all the clothing and provisions on board, and the cattle or horses wandering about the plains without owners. Some men attacked with the disease, have been laid on the ground and abandoned by their companions, and left to die in solitude and alone, with no sympathising hand to administer even a drop of water to assuage their mortal pangs. One man in this situation was found alive, but unable to speak. The company that found him, possessing more humanity than his comrades, halted two days and did all in their power to restore him; but he died, and was interred as decently as circumstances would permit.

I saw a beautiful child, about one year old, whose father and mother had both died of the cholera on the same day. A man of benevolent feelings had taken the child at the time I saw it, and was carrying the little orphan to California. I never heard of either afterwards.

That portion of the route upon which the pestilence prevailed, was from the town of St. Joseph, on the Missouri river, to the Rocky Mountains, a distance of about eight hundred miles. The pure and cool atmosphere in the region of those snowy summits, seems to have arrested the progress of the disease. But few cases of cholera occurred between the Rocky Moun-



tains and those of the Sierra Nevada. I shall say nothing more in relation to the dreaded pestilence, but could not with propriety say less, seeing that the cholera was one of the principal themes with us for many weeks ; but it so happened that only one man belonging to Captain Turner's train died of that disease, and that person was a well-read physician.

June 5th.—Rainy weather. We perceive that the river, and the bottom lands on each side of it, are becoming much narrower, not being more than six or eight miles from bluff to bluff. For the first time I noticed that the bluffs are composed of strata of rocks ; heretofore, they have consisted of sand, and a kind of hard white marl. Distance, ten miles.

#### THE LONE TREE.

June 6th.—The road sandy in some places, and miry in others, and we have several small creeks to cross. In the afternoon passed the Lone Tree, so called, it being the only tree that grows on the north side of the river, for a distance of two hundred miles. Our fuel, through this wide, timberless tract, is buffalo chips and dry weeds. Small bits of driftwood may sometimes be found, by searching the bottom, at some distance back from the road. We encamp on the eastern bank of Castle Creek, a stream, at this time, eighty feet wide and two feet deep ; the bed being of quicksand, said to be a bad stream to cross at high water. Distance, twenty-two miles.

#### APPEARANCE OF THE PLATTE.

June 7th.—We find that the bluffs are now composed of ledges of rocks, of moderate elevation, presenting

in some places a perpendicular front. Not a tree in sight in any direction. It is a naked, but still a verdant landscape. The river and the bluffs present an ever-changing aspect, which keeps out the idea of a tedious monotony. At one time you see the noble stream, with its rapid boiling torrent, entirely free from islands; soon after, you perceive the river sprinkled with countless little islands just peeping out of the water. At one time you find the bluffs crowding upon the river from both sides, then again receding from it, until the blue horizon shuts down upon a boundless plain. The banks are uniformly so low that a rise of four or five feet would deluge an immense extent of land. Such an occurrence, however, seldom happens; the width and rapidity of the stream drain off the accumulating waters. Distance, eighteen miles.

#### ANCIENT BLUFF RUINS.

June 8th.—Crossed Crab Creek, after which we ascended and descended a number of sand hills. In the afternoon, passed that wonderful assemblage of natural curiosities, called the Ancient Bluff Ruins. Their appearance is grand, solemn and impressive. They are situated about a mile to the north of the road. These bluffs, for several miles, greatly resemble some mighty ancient city in ruins. You here see pyramids and castles, palaces, forts and amphitheatres, temples, piazzas, battlements and columns, partly fallen down, with here and there a turret or tower, still standing erect. Another emigrant and myself clambered up to the summit of the lofty walls, and took a deliberate survey of these wonders. They present a perpendicular front to-

wards the south, like a wall partly fallen, the original height of which might have been two hundred feet—the columns that still remain being about that altitude. Ascending a lofty battlement, we could distinctly see the celebrated Chimney Rock, at forty miles distance to the south-west. Its outline as seen from this point, is like that of a tall slender column, of a whitish appearance, rising from the summit of a dark pyramid.

When a rail road to the Pacific shall pass this place, the lovers of Nature's Works will come here in crowds to feast their eyes with scenery worthy of the pencil of a Poussin, or a Michael Angelo. Distance, fourteen miles.

#### NATURAL CURIOSITIES.

June 9th.—Among the bluff ruins we found a supply of dry red cedar, and took some on board for fuel. A few scattering trees are visible to-day at a distance, and on the south side of the river. Buffalo grass, so called, clothes the plains in this quarter. It seems to be of a more nutritious quality than any of the cultivated grasses. By feeding upon it, the buffalo become excessively fat. About two o'clock, afternoon, we passed a rock, or rather an assemblage of rocks, forming the bluffs on the south side of the river. These rocks were of regular and splendid formation. One of them, called "Court-house Rock," has the appearance of a lordly castle, of the size of a half mile square, and the height of one hundred and fifty or two hundred feet. At a short distance from the south-east angle of the castle stands a solitary and lofty column, having a very striking resemblance to the "Leaning Tower of Pisa,"

in Italy. To-day is Sunday, but our train does not call a halt. Distance, twenty-five miles.

#### CHIMNEY ROCK.

June 10th.—At ten in the morning, passed the celebrated Chimney Rock. It is a noted landmark, being visible forty miles each way up and down the river. It stands seven miles south of the river and the road on that side. Many travelers go out to survey its curiosities. The chimney, or column, rises from a pyramid of immense size, as regular in form as those of Egypt. The column rises several hundred feet from the apex of the pyramid, and as to size, is in very exact architectural proportions to the size of the base on which it stands. At a distance, the chimney has a tall and slender appearance, like the minaret of a mosque, or the smoke-pipe of a steamer. Around the base of the column are inscribed the names of multitudes of persons who have from time to time visited this colossal wonder.

These objects would appear more striking to the beholder, were it not for the fact that thousands of fantastic shapes appear in the vicinity, and indeed in the whole range of bluffs on the south side of the river, and extending along for many miles. Every object presents a natural curiosity; a succession of them have been in sight during the whole of this day's travel.

#### SCOTT'S BLUFF.

By the aid of a little ideality, these objects can be easily molded into temples, towers, steeples, forts, castles and amphitheatres. I was not prepared to find that Nature had here, along the banks of the lonely

Platte, a river unknown to song, wrought upon such a scale of grandeur, where beauty and sublimity are combined in a manner truly wonderful.

The base of the bluffs along here, consists of a clay or marl, nearly white, while the summit often consists of strata of horizontal rocks. We encamp for the night about three miles east of Scott's Bluff, so called, on account of a man by the name of Scott, who died under peculiar circumstances, and whose mortal remains lie entombed at its base. This man was taken sick, and his party, in order to save their own lives, were obliged to leave him to perish alone, although at his own request. Scott's Bluff appears, from the spot where I now sit, like an immense castle, two hundred feet high and a mile square, with battlements, towers and redoubts flanking it around on all sides. Distance, twenty-five miles.

June 11th.—Passed Scott's Bluff at nine in the morning. Its lofty walls frown upon the passing throng, and seem to lack nothing but artillery to render it a complete and grand fortification. A little to the west of this place, the bluffs on that side suddenly recede to the distance of ten or fifteen miles from the river, but still present similar picturesque forms, of sizes greatly diminished in the distance. We find the river has now narrowed down to the width of half a mile, but the depth in the mean time has greatly increased.

#### GENERAL VIEW OF THE TRAINS.

The throng of emigrants has now become immense on our side of the Platte, and the great concourse of covered wagons has re-appeared on the opposite bank.



At a general view, the trains have the appearance of a vast army, moving in two columns through a boundless plain. The covered wagons keep nearly in straight lines in the roads, whilst throngs of armed men on horseback or on foot, travel on each side of the trains.

Climbing to the summit of a high conical hill that rises near our road, I saw Laramie Peak, a high mountain, belonging to the chain of the Black Hills. The Peak is fifty miles beyond, or west of Fort Laramie. Snow is visible about its summit. Distance, twenty-four miles.

#### ALKALINE WATERS—DISEASES.

June 12th.—Cool nights, and very warm in the middle of the day. The road sandy, and grass scarcely to be found. About noon, found a little timber, in small clumps, on our side of the river. We have as yet used but little river water, have generally obtained our supply from the numerous little wells, five or six feet deep, that have been dug by trains last year, or by those that have preceded us the present season. All the water, however, is tinctured with alkali, whether taken from the wells or the river, and I think that much of the sickness on the road is to be attributed to its use; but in this case there is no alternative. Nearly all the emigrants are troubled with bowel complaints, and derangements of the liver and kidneys are very general. We hear that the cholera is making fearful ravages among the trains on the south side of the Platte. On our side, that dreaded scourge has not yet made its appearance. Distance, twenty-two miles.

## FORT LARAMIE—SIOUX INDIANS.

June 13th.—Arrived opposite to Fort Laramie. It stands on the south side of the river, and distant from the same about a mile. The fortifications and Government buildings stand on a smooth green, descending a little towards the east and south. Clumps of native trees are dispersed over the landscape, and the whole presents quite a handsome appearance. A United States garrison is kept here, as a frontier post against the Indians. The abodes of civilization look pleasant to a traveler who has seen nothing but the huts of savages for more than five hundred miles. I will here state, that for three hundred miles back, Indians have been few in number, and far between. We, however, saw several Indian villages, consisting, in general, of twenty or thirty lodges.

An Indian lodge is constructed by setting up twelve poles, each sixteen feet in length, all united at the top, forming a regular cone. It is covered on the outside with dried buffalo hides, the flesh side out. An aperture is left open at the top, for the purpose of discharging the smoke of the fire, which is built on the ground in the center of the lodge. These Indians are of the Sioux tribe, and are much superior to the Pawnees in their appearance and character. On visiting our trains they never ask for food—and, it is said, make their boast of having never shed the blood of a white man. They are robust, and cleanly in their appearance, and seem to have abundant supplies of food and clothing of their own. Around their villages we observed cows, and other cattle, and many mules and ponies. On these they gallop about in high glee, as

independent as lords, and free as the birds that flit over the prairies. The Sioux are numerous, and are scattered over a wide extent of country.

#### DANGERS OF THE PLATTE.

We expected to cross the Platte at this place, but found no ferry-boat. Most of the trains that have traveled on the north side of the river, are here ferrying themselves over to the other side, and for boats, make use of their wagon beds, a dangerous mode of crossing such a stream. In these operations six men have been drowned within a day or two past. The river at this place is forty rods wide, sixteen feet deep, and is said to move near twenty miles per hour.

At the Fort they try to keep an account of the number of emigrants that pass ; a general invitation being given for companies to call and register their numbers. Some attend to this request, and others neglect it. No correct account, I think, can be obtained. According to the account kept at the Fort, six thousand teams have already gone forward the present season. The number still behind, is altogether unknown. Some surmise that one-half of this year's emigration has already passed this point.

#### THE NEW ROUTE.

In view of the dangers and difficulties of crossing over at this place, our company, after consultation, have decided to follow along the northern bank still, and try to find our way through to the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, without crossing the Platte at all. Our success in this undertaking is considered as very doubtful. At the Fort we can gain no certain information

concerning the route. Many tell us we cannot get through, and shall be under the necessity of returning, and crossing the river at the Fort. Others say, that if we do get through, we shall have to go around an impassable mountain, taking us out of our way one hundred and sixty miles. With all these alarming stories, there are a number of small companies here who are determined to take the new, and as it is here considered, unexplored route. A train consisting of eighty-ox-teams started upon this route six days ago, and several smaller companies have since followed their trail. We hear nothing from any of them. We intend to follow the track of those who have gone before. We think that if we cannot get through, we can at least find the river again, and can cross at any other place as well as at the Fort.

We have now passed through what may be properly styled the Plains, and are in view of a landscape, consisting of scenery of a very different character. Distance, six miles.

Distance, from Council Bluffs to Fort Laramie, four hundred and ninety-three miles.

## CHAPTER III.

Glimpse of the Black Hills.—Singular Mountains—Wild Sheep.—Wild Barley Fields.—Government Cattle.—Natural Pyramids.—Salt and Alkaline Waters—Antelopes.—Volcanic and Water-worn Rocks, &c.—Ancient River bed.—Narrow Escape—Careless use of Fire-arms.—Trains—New Route.—Snowy Peak—Emigrants Drowned.—Curious Formations.—Beautiful Valley.—Upper crossing of the Platte.—Alkaline Pond—Ancient Crater.—Rocky Mountains—The Devil's Gate.—Sweetwater Valley—Sound of Thunder.—Mountains covered with Snow.—Wagons abandoned—Destruction of Property.—View from the Rocky Mountains.—The South Pass.—Salt Lake Road—Table Land.—Card Playing—Reckless Husband.—Green River and Valley.—Black Creek.—Independence Day.—Water-Marks—Fort Bridger.—A Canon.—Hurricane.—Terrific Ford—Tar Spring—Tall Rocks.—False Alarm.—A Dangerous Ford.—Tremendous Descent to Salt Lake.—First View of the Valley.—Visit from a Mormon.

### GLIMPSE OF THE BLACK HILLS.

June 14th.—Took the new route, and moved forward upon a fine road, not far from the river. In the course of two or three miles, came among hills of moderate elevation, covered with scattering groves of pine timber, of middling size, but inferior quality, full of branches from near the ground. Large numbers of logs are collected at various points along the river, intended for building purposes about the Fort. The country becomes uneven, and we no longer find alluvial lands along the Platte. All things indicate that



we have left the Plains, and have entered the skirts of the mountain region. The water, in small streams, is much better, and runs over beds of pebbles. Some large masses of rocks are strown around the landscape. We already seem to be in a purer atmosphere. The grass is better, and looks more fresh and green.

The Black Hills begin to show their distant summits, stretching across our path in front. Encamped by the side of a fine brook; good fuel near at hand. Distance, sixteen miles.

#### SINGULAR MOUNTAINS—WILD SHEEP.

June 15th.—Passed over and among hills, and saw several detached conical mountains, of singular formation, and of beautiful appearance. They were made up of successive terraces of rocks, between every two of which appears to be an horizontal strata of earth, from ten to twenty feet in thickness, covered with green grass and flowers, with here and there a small green pine or cedar. This arrangement continues from base to summit, and reminds me of what travelers relate concerning the terraced and cultivated mountains in Japan.

The whole distance passed to-day, is a country with a surface greatly diversified, consisting of smooth swells, and many high, sharp hills. Most of these are covered with grass, but I observed a number that were composed entirely of rounded pebbles. Rounded pebbles are geological proofs of the action of water.

The waves of old ocean must, at one time, have dashed here for a long period of time, in order to have thrown up such towering monuments. We saw a flock

of wild Rocky Mountain sheep. They were at some distance, standing on the top of a high hill, and apparently looking down in astonishment upon the noisy multitude which was thus breaking in upon the eternal solitude of their domain. Ram's horns in abundance strew the ground in this quarter, resembling the common kind, but several times heavier. One pair weighed forty-seven pounds.

#### WILD BARLEY FIELDS.

In the afternoon, we came into a region of country covered with the richest verdure, consisting principally of wild barley. It resembles the tame kind, is now about twelve inches high, and waves gracefully in the wind, like that growing in cultivated fields. Here is the finest pasturage for cattle, sheep or horses. Hundreds of thousands of acres are covered with barley. The flocks of all New England might be fattened here. Here is the country in which shepherds might pitch their tents, and accompanied with their faithful dogs, with crook and pipe, watch their flocks as they graze the mountain-side, or take shelter from the blast behind the giant rocks, or in the deep resounding dells.

#### GOVERNMENT CATTLE.

Feeding upon this range, we saw a large number of domestic cattle. They belonged to Government, and are kept for the purpose of supplying the military frontier posts with beef. Fuel is abundant in this quarter, consisting of dry pine and red cedar. Good water abounds. Indeed, this is not a bad country for a farmer, especially for one whose operations were confined mostly to graz-

ing. We encamp among scattering cedars, by the side of a small stream.

We here overtook a large train of ox-teams from Missouri. They had a number of milch cows. I obtained some milk for supper and breakfast; having had none for a long time, it was an acceptable treat. With the ox train are many women and children. Distance, twenty miles.

#### NATURAL PYRAMIDS.

June 16th.—Sunday.—The weather cool and pleasant, and we pursue our journey. The scenery, in the forenoon, much like that which we saw yesterday. In the afternoon, the land consisted of high, rolling prairie, the vegetation a mixture of grass and barley. This prairie had one unusual feature; arising from the surface of the smooth swells, were great numbers of natural pyramids, with sharp pointed summits, of elevations ranging from fifty to an hundred feet. Distance, thirty miles.

#### SALT AND ALKALINE WATERS—ANTELOPES.

June 17th.—The road to-day occasionally comes down to the Platte river, and then makes wide deviations from it. We crossed a clear stream of water, but found it too salt to drink. We now find grass, but no barley, and some wide spaces nearly destitute of all vegetation. No fuel, except drift-wood, along the river bank. All the water, except the Platte, strongly impregnated with alkali. This is a wild, romantic region, and during the day we saw landscapes of singular beauty, and an endless variety of scenery that would be difficult either to paint or to describe. It will be

recollected, that we are now trying an experiment, and are making an attempt to reach the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, without crossing the Platte. If we succeed, it will settle a point of great importance to future emigrants. The Platte is a terrible stream to cross, except at low water, and this is never found to be the case at this season of the year, being swollen by the melting of the snows on the mountains.

Our men killed an antelope, and we saw droves of these animals bounding over the hills. A buffalo ran past, this morning, very near our camp. Through the day, our hunters are constantly scouring the hills and vales in quest of game. Their success is such as to furnish all with an abundant supply of fresh meat. The hunters frequently climb the sharp peak of some high hill to look for game, or to enjoy the prospect of the surrounding country. I saw a man to-day standing erect on the pinnacle of a very high, conical hill, and at the distance of a mile, bore a striking resemblance to a statue on the top of a pyramid.

In the night, the thermometer stood four degrees above freezing point. Distance, twenty-five miles.

#### VOLCANIC AND WATER-WORN ROCKS, &c.

June 18th.—To-day we pass through very diversified scenes, over and among hills of singular formation, and through numerous deep gullies or channels, worn out by torrents in former times, but dry at present. The whole region around seems strangely broken up and disrupted, presenting spires, and walls, and perpendicular cliffs. Many of the rocks bear evident proof that waves of water once rolled against them, in unknown ages past,

wearing them into a variety of picturesque forms.— Noah's Flood, even admitting that such an event ever took place, was a cause quite inadequate to produce these and such like appearances. These rocks might have been thus water-worn previous to the upheaval of the crust of our globe, at which time no land had as yet protruded above the waters, and an ocean, without a shore, wrapped the earth around from pole to pole.

It is evident, from innumerable appearances presented in this and other parts of the world, that all the land now visible has been gained from the water, and has been lifted up, either by the force of internal fires, or by means of a gradual cooling of the interior of our earth, which process has been gradually going on since the present organization of the globe. Among the proofs of the foregoing theory in relation to the upheaval of the land, we notice water-worn rocks, rounded pebbles, and immense quantities of sea-shells, all of which are found at vast elevations above the present surface of the ocean.

#### ANCIENT RIVER BED.

This afternoon we went through the dry bed of what seems to have once been a large river, eighty rods wide, the bed composed of quicksand, and the banks four feet high. We have passed several such dry river beds before, but none of them were of so great a size as this last. After passing the dry bed of the river, we soon came to another of smaller size, and which may have been a branch of the former, and from its western bank, consisting of rock, gushed a spring of pure and exceedingly cold water. Near the spring we discovered stone



coal, of an excellent quality. We encamp near the river, in a very beautiful locality. Distance, twenty-four miles.

#### NARROW ESCAPE—CARELESS USE OF FIRE-ARMS.

June 19th.—Sunday.—Our company lay by to wash, cook, &c. We find here about fifty acres of low land, perfectly level, covered with rich grass about six inches high, and fenced around on all sides by a sharp ridge of barren sand. It is not far from the river, upon the banks of which we find abundance of drift-wood.

Many emigrants have been killed the present season by the accidental or careless discharge of fire-arms. I stood a narrow chance at this encampment. I went down to the river after a bucket of water. A fellow came out of one of the tents and discharged his rifle, which had been loaded for some time. He fired towards the river, never mistrusting that any person was there. The ball lodged in the sand-ridge, within a few feet of my head. Since I have been upon this journey, bullets have several times whistled past me, sent from the rifle of some straggling sportsman. Many of these fellows, who carry fire-arms, are so senseless or reckless, and withal so eager for sport, that, rather than lose a chance for a shot, they will discharge their pieces, no matter if they fire in the direction of the whole train.

#### TRAINS—NEW ROUTE.

Several trains are in sight on the south side of the river; the first we have seen in that direction since leaving Fort Laramie.

If we succeed by this route in getting into the vicinity of the upper crossing of the Platte, we shall then fall

into the great crowd that now moves on the south side of the river. As yet we have found no place that is difficult for a loaded wagon to pass, and one hundred dollars laid out in labor would remove every obstruction in the way.

SNOWY PEAK—EMIGRANTS DROWNED.

June 20th.—We follow the river most of the day, and find the country exceedingly barren. The Platte looks no less here than it does at Fort Laramie. The stream is very crooked, and winds its rapid course around the bases of the hills and mountains. We have not as yet lost sight of Laramie's Peak since we first came in sight of it. I do not know its height, but snow lying upon it at this time of the year, denotes an altitude of ten or twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea.

We perceive to-day that many of the emigrants are crossing in their wagon beds to our side of the river, and we hear that men are daily drowned in these operations. If one of these frail boats oversets, all on board are lost. Not one in a thousand can save his life by swimming, no matter how expert a swimmer. The water is cold, being formed from the melting snows, and the current rolls, boils, and rushes along with tremendous velocity. The goods and passengers are ferried across, and the cattle and horses are forced into the water, and compelled to swim the raging torrent. The animals are exceedingly loth to enter the stream, and have to be pushed in by main force. In this process the men frequently wade in so far as to lose their footing, are swept down by the tide and drowned. Where we stopped on the river bank at noon, they had

just rescued a man from a watery grave. He had attempted to swim the river on horseback, driving his cattle. The horse was rolled over, and the rider lost his hold. Some men in a wagon-bed boldly went to his relief, and succeeded in bringing him to the shore before life was extinct.

#### CURIOUS FORMATIONS.

During the day, passed a high perpendicular ledge, at the bottom of which lay a great number of singular rocks. They had fallen down from the ledge above them, in which they had once been imbedded. They were a kind of iron-stone, as round as a cannon ball, and nearly as heavy, according to size. Some of them had rolled out upon the grass-ground, several rods from the foot of the ledge. They were from three inches to two feet in diameter, and many were still sticking in the rocks above, and standing out in relief. Several smatterers in geology being present, a question arose as to the manner in which these balls became imbedded in the rock, which was of a species different from themselves. After discussing the subject, a conclusion was arrived at, that these balls were originally thrown up to a vast height by volcanic agency while in a melted state; the ledge also at that time being a mass of molten lava, the balls were cooled in their ascent and descent, like shot falling from a tower, thus sinking into the lava, which afterwards cooled, and formed the rock as it now appears.

#### BEAUTIFUL VALLEY.

About the middle of the afternoon, after having traveled through sixteen miles of rocks and hills of dreary

aspect, and barren as the wilds of Arabia, we suddenly descended into a level valley, about a mile in breadth, through which runs a small brook of good water. Here was rich grass, and numerous little groves resounding with the harmony of birds, whilst the air was perfumed with the scent of flowers, among which was a profusion of wild roses, also peas, some of which were in bloom, and others in pods about half the size of the common field pea. It was a green and delightful spot, and formed a striking contrast with the dreary desert that surrounds it. We came to the river and encamped in a long narrow grove of whitewood trees, and found a little scattering grass on the sides of the neighboring hills. Distance, thirty miles.

#### UPPER CROSSING OF THE PLATTE.

June 21st.—After traveling twenty miles through what may be called a desert, we arrived abreast of the Ferry at the upper crossing of the Platte, which we have now followed on its northern bank near seven hundred miles, but shall here take our final leave of this turbulent stream. We have solved the problem respecting the new route. It is a better road than the old one that runs on the south side of the river. There is no serious obstacle in the way. We are now of the opinion that those who own the ferries have their agents about the Fort, to keep in circulation those false and alarming tales in reference to the difficulties of the new route. We are now upon the main road over which all emigrants must pass, whether bound for Oregon or California. It is nearly a continuous, unbroken procession. We pass the ferrying-place, leaving it three

miles to the left. We learn that seven thousand teams have already crossed this ferry the present season. Thousands have crossed at various points below, and other thousands are now passing who do not cross the river at all. A man was drowned near the ferry this afternoon, in an attempt to drive his cattle into the river. Here is the place where Pierce and Yonts, neighbors from Illinois, were drowned by the upsetting of a wagon-bed, in 1849. At present there are five good rope ferry-boats, on which they charge for crossing, five dollars for each wagon, and one dollar for each animal. I suppose the owners of this ferry will clear a "cool fifty thousand" the present year. This is an easier way of making "a pile," than digging it out of the hills and gulches of California.

Encamped on a swell of barren desert, four miles west of the junction of the roads. Distance, twenty-four miles.

#### ALKALINE POND—ANCIENT CRATER.

June 22d.—Started at three o'clock in the morning, glad to quit a bleak and barren desert, and at ten o'clock came in sight of a green valley, one mile north of the road, in which were multitudes of people. Thousands of animals were grazing around. Here are several large springs, the water clear, but a little warm, and it holds in solution a considerable quantity of some mineral substance, giving it a sickening taste. It is now necessary to keep a sharp look-out, and as much as possible avoid the alkaline waters. Two-thirds of the ground is whitened with this substance, and nine-tenths of the water is tinctured with it. We this morning



passed the carcasses of a large number of cattle and horses recently killed by drinking the waters of a small pond, around the shores of which lies a fringe of *saleratus*, like drifted snow.

In the course of the day, our road passed through a circular valley, surrounded on all sides by a high ridge of shattered rocks. This place is on the summit of a large swell of land, and is, doubtless, the extinguished crater of some ancient volcano. Bits of mineral coal lie scattered around, with which multitudes of names have been written on the rocks. The road, since passing the ferry, is composed of a hard, dry gravel, worn perfectly smooth to the width of sixty feet. If it had been McAdamised it could have been no better.

Distance, twenty-five miles.

#### ROCKY MOUNTAINS—THE DEVIL'S GATE.

June 23d.—Most of the distance passed this day, has been a dry, sandy desert, destitute of all vegetation, except sedge bushes. These cover the whole country, and many of them being dead and dry give the landscape a remarkably dreary appearance. This shrub, however, has not been made in vain; the dry stalks are excellent fuel, and resemble branches of dry cedar.

At two o'clock, afternoon, arrived on the banks of the Sweet Water river, one hundred feet wide and three feet deep. We are now in sight of a subordinate chain of the Rocky Mountains; their summits are covered with snow, whilst along their base runs a fringe of evergreen timber.

We encamp for the night near the Devil's Gate, so called—not a very agreeable neighborhood, if we were

judged by the name. At this place the Sweet Water rushes down a tremendous chasm, forming a most terrific pass through a mountain of rock, which seems to have been rent asunder by some convulsion in nature.

For several days past, we have had slight thunder showers every afternoon. Distance, twenty-four miles.

#### SWEET WATER VALLEY—SOUND OF THUNDER.

June 24th.—An unbroken procession of carriages now covers the road. It would seem that this immense multitude of animals cannot hold out upon such scanty subsistence much longer, yet the number that have died, as yet, is not great considering the circumstances. The stream we are now following up, is a branch of the Platte, and heads in the Rocky Mountains, a little to the north of the South Pass. We lay by at ten in the morning, on account of the sickness of a man in our company. Distance, ten miles.

June 25th.—Pleasant weather. We are still eighty miles from the South Pass. The valley of the Sweet Water generally consists of rolling land, from five to ten miles wide. The soil is sandy, with occasionally a narrow border of alluvial land along the river. In the valley are some large tracts of naked sand, presenting a fac-simile of the great African desert, the sand being blown into ever-shifting heaps, like drifts of snow. To the right and left of the valley are dark mountains mostly of naked rocks.

A thunder shower in the afternoon. The sound of thunder in these elevated regions is peculiarly grand, as it reverberates from mountain to mountain, and its loud detonations are sent back from many a deep dell

and hollow echoing cave. The nights are becoming extremely cold as we gain a higher elevation.

Distance, twenty miles.

#### MOUNTAINS COVERED WITH SNOW.

June 26th.—Started at five in the morning, and soon forded the river three times; all the crossings deep, the mountains crowding the stream at this place into a narrow channel. In such cases, we raise our wagon-beds by means of blocks of wood.

A lofty chain of mountains is visible, fifty or sixty miles to the west. Their summits, for a considerable distance downwards towards their base, appear as if smoothed over with vast depths of snow. They resemble a series of white clouds stretching along the blue verge of the distant horizon. I suppose this to be the main range of the Rocky Mountains. Distance, twenty miles.

#### WAGONS ABANDONED—DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY.

June 27th.—A part of the company with which I travel, have now come to the determination to abandon their wagons, and pack their clothing and provisions upon their horses. This arrangement did not suit myself, and a man by the name of Witherell. We therefore went at work, and soon transformed the fore-wheels of the wagon into a cart for two horses, and upon this carriage we stowed our baggage. These operations occupied our time during the day.

A case of cholera occurred near our camp; the man died, and was buried as soon as possible. I have personally witnessed but little sickness on this journey. Disease and death seem to have confined their ravages

to the south side of the Platte, and to the emigration that has traveled on that side. We observe that a large proportion of the new graves are those of Missourians.

Large numbers are leaving their wagons, and packing upon their animals. Horses, mules, and even oxen, are used for packing. The wagons are generally broken in pieces by their owners, and used for fuel before they leave the ground. The number of vehicles that share this fate, it would be impossible to calculate. Thousands of fine trunks, boxes and barrels, are burnt for cooking purposes. Property that cost one hundred dollars in the States, is none too much to make one comfortable fire in an evening. The whole way begins to be strewn with property of every kind, which has been thrown away by the owners.

The number of carcasses of dead animals increases as we proceed. From the upper crossing to this place, I think an average of those lying near the road would be one each half-mile. The effluvia is quite annoying, and with it the atmosphere seems everywhere to be charged.

#### VIEW FROM THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

June 28th.—At two o'clock, afternoon, left the banks of the Sweet Water, and soon after had to climb up the steep side of a mountain three or four miles. This being surmounted, we found ourselves on a high table land of vast extent, having snowy summits in sight to the west, south-west and north. Upon this stupendous height I halted a moment, and looking back towards the east, the prospect was one of surpassing grandeur. An immense extent of country is visible, and from its

expanded surface, hundreds of summits shoot up, mingling with the clouds, many of them glimmering with snow, reflecting the beams of the declining sun. We encamp in a delightful spot, in the midst of clumps of aspen trees, and near a fine spring of good water, not tinctured with the everlasting alkali. The atmosphere feels like wintry blasts, and with all our overcoats we are shivering with the cold. The grass is green and flourishing, being of a species fitted by nature to the atmosphere of this frigid climate.

Distance, sixteen miles.

#### THE SOUTH PASS.

June 29th.—We perceive dense masses of snow in the ravines far below us, and lying on the north sides of hills within a few rods of our road. I observed ice an inch in thickness this morning in a tin dish.

At four o'clock, afternoon, crossed the summit, or celebrated South Pass of the Rocky Mountains. Immediately at the Pass there is no great elevation, and it is difficult to ascertain the precise point where the waters divide to the east and west. The country is a table land, with numerous hills and rocky projections rising from its surface. This table land extends an hundred miles or so to the west and south-west, in which directions the view is at length arrested by the hoary summits of the Wind River and Bear River Mountains. Fifteen or twenty miles to the north of the Pass, rises the lofty mountain called Fremont's Peak, the summit of which is above thirteen thousand feet above the level of the sea—the altitude of the Pass being seven thousand five hundred feet. We soon descended a gently inclined plane for several miles, and came to



Pacific Springs. The water is pure and abundant. The stream issuing from these springs, runs westward towards the Pacific Ocean; hence the name of the springs. Near these springs we encamped, amidst thousands of other emigrants. We here met the U. S. Mail from Salt Lake. The conductors made a halt for the night, and opened a temporary office, at which a multitude of letters were soon received, to be sent to friends in the States. While here, a fine train of sixteen splendid carriages overtook and passed us. It was one of the passenger trains from the city of St. Louis, which takes passengers from that place to California, for the sum of two hundred dollars.

In traveling through this desolate region at present, it is difficult for one to realize that he is at so great a distance from the haunts of civilization. On all sides I see multitudes of people, wagons, cattle and horses at all times throng the way. The road, from morning till night, is crowded like Pearl Street or Broadway. In the evening, fires are seen in all directions, gleaming from a city of white tents. We hear on all sides the lowing of cattle, the neighing of horses, the braying of mules, and barking of dogs, mingled with the clack of human voices. To this is added the sound of the viol, bugle, tamborine and clarionette. To fill up the chorus, rifles and pistols are almost constantly cracking, responsive to the rumbling, grinding music of carriage-wheels still passing along. Distance, twenty-two miles.

#### SALT LAKE ROAD—TABLE LAND.

June 30th.—Pursued our way, and about noon turned to the left, taking the road towards Salt Lake. By pur-

suing this course, we rid ourselves of the crowds bound for Oregon, and those going to California by way of Fort Hall, and "Sublett's Cut-Off." There is, however, no scarcity of company on the Salt Lake road.

The plain on which we are now traveling, is of nearly the same height above the sea as the South Pass, viz: seven thousand five hundred feet. Towards night, arrived at little Sandy River, fifty feet wide and four feet deep. On the banks we found encampments of emigrants, and some tolerable grass, and here pitched our tent also. Distance, twenty-four miles.

#### CARD PLAYING—RECKLESS HUSBAND.

July 1st.—Pursuing our course ten miles, we arrived at the Big Sandy River, which we forded. It is one hundred feet wide and four feet deep. A number of Indians were sauntering around. Here we found an ox-team, and a woman, and five or six small children. No other white people were present until we arrived. They had not dared to attempt to ford the river, and were suffering greatly through fear of the Indians. We recollected that four miles previous to arriving at the ford, we saw four men sitting by the side of the road, engaged in playing cards. We found that one of these men was the woman's husband, and he had sent his wife and family on alone among the savages, while he, more of a savage still, had thus stopped with his associates by the way-side, to recreate themselves by the sublime performance of shuffling a few bits of spotted pasteboard. Our arrival relieved the woman of her fears, and we were all, upon learning the circumstances, greatly provoked at the reckless folly of her husband.

After passing this stream, we found sixteen miles of barren plain, when we arrived upon the right bank of the Big Sandy again, which, it would seem, we have been following, although it has not been in sight. We here encamped. Distance, twenty-six miles.

#### GREEN RIVER AND VALLEY.

July 2d.—A similar level plain continues ten miles further, which brings us to Green River. This stream along here runs a very serpentine course through a level bottom about a mile in breadth. It heads in the mountains, far to the north. It is the main branch of the Colorado, which discharges its waters into the head of the Gulf of California. Along the banks are narrow groves of cottonwood trees, of stately size, which, with their abundant foliage of light green, give to the Green River valley a delightful appearance, when contrasted with the barren plains upon each side. The River is now very high, thirty rods wide, deep, and at least as rapid as the Upper Platte. There are two indifferent ferry-boats here. The price of crossing a wagon, five dollars. A Frenchman owns this establishment, who lives in an Indian lodge near the river. He has two Indian wives. They were neatly clad in calico dresses, and seemed industriously engaged in the manufacture of plain moccasins. I purchased a pair for one dollar, and found them quite comfortable to wear, in walking along these dry and dusty deserts. This stream is equally as dangerous to cross as the Platte, and many men have been drowned in it the present season.

Distance, ten miles.

## BLACK CREEK.

July 3d.—After crossing Green River, and falling into a great crowd of emigrant teams, we followed the stream downwards five miles, when, turning to the right, we pass over high swells of barren land covered, however, as usual, with sedge bushes. Sixteen miles brought us to the bank of Black Creek, too wide and deep to ford. We do not cross this stream, but follow it up on the right bank. A tolerable supply of grass. Distance, twenty-one miles.

## INDEPENDENCE DAY.

July 4th.—Spent this celebrated day in traveling over dry and dusty roads, and ascending and descending large swells of bleak and barren land. Towards night, descended a regularly inclined plane for a number of miles, and at length came to two fine creeks of pure cold water, where we encamped. The snow-covered mountains to the south seem to be about thirty miles distant. Our general course is south-west. Distance, twenty miles.

## WATER MARKS—FORT BRIDGER.

July 5th.—The same dusty roads continue, and numerous hills appear on all sides, composed of a kind of hard white marl. These hills are of beautiful and regular forms, and seem to be the fragments of hills that were once of a much larger size, which rains or floods have now worn down to their present fantastic shapes.

About noon, arrived at old Fort Bridger. A Frenchman, by the name of Bridger, here keeps an extensive store of goods, with which to traffic with the Indians,

or with emigrants. Fort Bridger is not a garrison of troops, but merely a trading post. Here is a level green valley of circular form, twelve or fifteen miles in circumference. Over the valley are dispersed numerous clumps of tall pine trees, whilst around it on all sides, except the east, the mountains rise abruptly, and are covered with snow down to within a few hundred feet of the level of the plain. The climate is here quite too cold for agricultural products to flourish, excepting grass. The most striking peculiarity of this place, is the fact that seven rushing streams or rivers course their way through the valley, all within the distance of a mile or two, the smallest being a good sized mill stream. Their waters are extremely cold, and their rushing sound can be heard at a considerable distance. I apprehend that all these streams unite at the lower end of the valley. Bridger keeps a large number of cattle and horses, is said to be vastly rich, and to have perfect control of all the Indian tribes for a great distance around him. Upon the whole, this high mountain vale is one of the most romantic spots that have as yet fallen under my observation. Distance, twenty-five miles.

A CANON.\*

July 6th.—Our course, in the fore part of the day, is over high hills, and through deep defiles, or canons. As this is the first time the word *canon* occurs in my Journal, I will explain its meaning.

The term is said by some to be Spanish, and others affirm that the word was invented by Col. Fremont's party, when exploring this part of the continent. Whatever may have been the origin of the word, it

\* Pronounced *Kanyon*.



nevertheless supplies a deficiency in our language, in which there is no term to express the idea implied by this word. A canon is a narrow and difficult pass between two mountains, a stream of water, in general, running at the bottom. For example—when we are to pass some range of mountains, we follow up one canon to the height of land, and down another on the opposite side. Thus most canons have a steep ascent or descent.

We observe heaps of snow lying around, both above and below the level of the road.

#### HURRICANE.

We find good grass and excellent water. No alkali to trouble us here. In the afternoon we passed over the Bear River Mountains, and at one point were eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, five hundred feet higher than the South Pass.

When we were at the highest point, following a ridge, we encountered a hurricane, accompanied by thunder, lightning, hail, rain and snow, a species of storm that was to us a novelty. Just as the gale came on, fortunately for us, we found a shelter behind a high shelving rock, or we might, perhaps, have been blown down the side of the mountain.

Arrived upon the bank of Bear river, and encamped. Distance, thirty miles.

#### TERRIFIC FORD—TAR SPRING—TAIL ROCKS.

July 7th.—Forded Bear river, the most terrific stream to cross we have as yet encountered. A great number of emigrants were present, and we all stood upon the bank until late in the morning, dreading the

perilous attempt to pass, or, searching up and down in vain to find a better place at which to ford the turbulent stream. The river is twelve or fifteen rods wide, and runs with greater rapidity than either the Platte or Green river. Indeed, it is a perfect sluice running down the side of a mountain, the top of which is covered with snow. Our cart, by happening to steer precisely the right course, came safely through, but a wagon was swept down, upset, and all the baggage lost. The team was saved. Three men did but barely escape a watery grave. After crossing the river, we ascended a hill, and entering a canon descended for the distance of sixteen miles.

Among the curiosities in this quarter, is the Tar Spring, so called. There oozes from the earth an unlimited supply of a substance greatly resembling common tar. The emigrants generally stop at the spring, and fill their tar buckets for the purpose of tarring their wagons, for which it answers a very good purpose. I think it probable that this substance is similar to the Naphtha, found in such quantities in Persia, and in that country used by the poor for fuel.

The hills and valleys passed to-day look green and beautiful, like pastures in the time of Spring.

Towards the lower end of the canon I observed a singular assemblage of rocks standing on the top of a high hill. There was a cluster of sixty or eighty sharp cones or needles, from ten to one hundred feet high, and at a distance might have been mistaken for the steeples and cupolas in a city. Another rock attracted my notice. It was in the form of an egg, the size, perhaps, twelve by twenty feet. This colossal egg stood perfectly

erect upon its small end, resting upon a base consisting of a square column of stone, twenty or thirty feet high. It stood on the declivity of a mountain, and from the road it looked as though the egg might easily have been hurled from its pedestal, and with a thundering crash rolled down into the canon. Distance, twenty miles.

#### FALSE ALARM.

July 8th.—During the past night, two men who were out guarding horses, thought they saw Indians lurking about. The guards were dreadfully alarmed, and setting up a most dismal cry of horror, started for our camp, distant about a mile. We were in bed in our tents, but heard the outcry, and in an instant every man was on his feet, with arms in hand, prepared for battle. We soon arrived on the ground, but the Indians had fled, if any had been there, and we soon crawled back to rest, but before doing so went out and brought in all the horses and made them fast to the wagons.

In the course of yesterday we saw a number of Indians along the road. Leaving camp, we passed over a ridge and entered another canon, in which we traveled near twenty miles. Upon the right and left of us, the mountains rise to a great height. In one part of the canon, upon our right, there stretches along for a considerable distance a perpendicular ledge or cliff, from five hundred to a thousand feet in height. The whole cliff is a conglomerate rock, as though the mass was once in a molten state, at which time it was saturated with showers of rounded pebbles. Appearances indicate that this immense canon has been worn down by the mere action of the stream that now runs at the

bottom. Such an operation, it would seem, must have required a vast and inconceivable length of time.

At six, afternoon, arrived on the banks of Webber river, and followed it up two miles, and encamped in a delightful place. There were numerous little groves of second-growth trees besprinkling a verdant lawn, consisting of the river bottom, about half a mile in breadth. During the day, we have noticed wild currants and gooseberries; also a profusion of angelica plants, &c. We forded the stream that runs down the canon, nineteen times; most of the crossings bad. Distance, twenty-four miles.

#### A DANGEROUS FORD.

July 9th.—Crossed Webber river, another tremendous stream. It is six or eight rods wide, and three or four feet deep, equally as rapid and as dangerous to cross as Bear river. We passed through without accident. An hour previous to our crossing, a horse-cart was carried down by the current, overturned, all the loading lost, and an old lady thrown into the river. She was carried down a considerable distance, but was finally rescued by a man who waded in and caught her at a point where the current brought her near the shore. After fording this river, we followed up the stream fifteen miles; lofty, precipitous mountains on both sides. At length, turning to the right, went up a steep canon five miles, then descending a succession of sharp pitches a mile or two, came to camp in a level, green valley, three or four miles across, through which runs several small streams, the banks full, and water turbid. The valley was full of cattle, horses, tents, and

wagons; six or eight large trains being here encamped. Five or six miles to the south, rises a very lofty mountain, the summit bound in everlasting snow, whilst upon its sides are scattered groves of pine, cedar, aspen, and balsam fir. Distance, twenty-one miles.

#### TREMENDOUS DESCENT TO SALT LAKE.

July 10th.—Moved forward, and at about nine o'clock in the morning entered a canon, ascending for six miles. This brought us up to a dividing ridge, at an immense elevation. We then descended ten miles through the most ragged and frightful canon in all this region. I think we descend three or four thousand feet in the course of the ten miles. Down this fearful declivity rushes a small river, at the bottom of the canon roaring loudly, as it tumbles over a succession of cataracts. We have to ford this stream thirty-nine times, and no crossing can be worse. In the meantime the mountains on each side are nearly perpendicular, and in some places the towering cliffs seem actually to impend over the traveler's head.

In several places, the mountains of naked rock from each side come down at so sharp an angle, that the only road is the channel of the river itself. Down this we go, pushed along by the current, and floundering over huge boulders in the stream. The road resembles a huge flight of stairs, like Jacob's Ladder reaching from earth to heaven. The path consists of small rough stones, mingled with dry dust, and at the sharp pitches the wheels are locked, and the carriage slides from top to bottom. In many places, barely chaining the wheels is not sufficient; in such cases, a strong rope is fastened



to the hind-axle of the wagon, a number of men take hold of it, and, by holding back, the carriage is steadied down the hill.

We were not without company through this rough descent, as was Sinbad the Sailor on his memorable passage through the dark Rock, or as the hero Æneas, when he made his fearful descent into Hades, or the shades below. On the contrary, when we arrived within a mile or two of the lower end of the Pass, we found our progress arrested for two hours by an accumulation of teams, entirely filling the road for two miles. At length the concourse moved forward, and late in the evening we arrived at the termination of this terrific descent, and suddenly emerged into the famous Valley of Great Salt Lake. But night veiled the scene, and here, in darkness, we pitched our camp.

Distance, eighteen miles.

#### FIRST VIEW OF THE VALLEY.

July 11th.—After sun-rise, I took a brief survey of the surrounding scenery. Our camp, I find, is upon a bench of land at the base of the mountain. Immense numbers of emigrants are encamped around us. Facing the west, I see the great Salt Lake in that direction, and distant twenty-five miles. The City is visible eight miles to the north, and stands upon an inclined plane, which descends from the mountains towards the lake. At my back rises a high chain of rough, jagged mountains, stretching north and south beyond the reach of sight. The whole expanse looks bleak and naked, there being no trees in sight, except a very few along the banks of streams, and some stunted, scattering pines

and cedars on the sides of the mountains. The valley is on all sides surrounded by mountains and chains of mountains running in all directions. The flat lands near the lake present numerous small ponds, glimmering in the morning sunbeams. The plain is crossed by several cold, rapid streams, either discharging themselves into the lake, or else sinking in the earth before reaching the shore. Such is a hasty view of the scenery of the valley. In this snug retreat dwell the Mormons, the followers of Joe Smith, fenced in by deserts and mountains, like granite walls reaching up to the clouds.

#### VISIT FROM A MORMON.

July 12th.—Still lying by, at the entrance of the canon. A Mormon elder came to our camp, who was a zealous follower of the Prophet of Nauvoo. He talked loud and long. The information I obtained from him, may be summed up as follows :

1st. The number of Mormons in the valley, he did not know, but their settlements extend forty-five miles to the north, and an hundred and seventy to the south of the city.

2d. The city is divided into nineteen Wards, in each of which a Bishop is the presiding officer.

3d. Plurality of wives is practiced in the city, and throughout the valley. This, he contended, is right, according to the practice of the holy Saints of old. He was of opinion, that about every fourth man among the Mormons has more wives than one. He also said it was no one's business how many wives a man had, and he did not wish to keep this part of Mormonism a secret.

4th. He believed, without a doubt, that the Mormons will soon overthrow the present Government of the United States, and ultimately all other human governments, and then there will be "peace on earth, and good will amongst men."

5th. He said the Mormons pay tithes to the Church, of the tenth part of the products of their stores, shops, fields and flocks; and those who go to the California mines, pay from the proceeds of their labor in the same ratio.

6th. The largest amount of gold that any one Mormon has obtained by mining in California in a year, is seven thousand dollars.

7th. He expects that the Saints, as he styled the Mormons, will yet be persecuted and driven from this obscure retreat.

8th. He says the Mormons know they are right—other sects believe or guess they are—but we know it! We have the witness—our doctrine is attested by prophecy, tongues and miracles—and we, said he, shall hold fast the faith, whatever the persecution or opposition.

9th. He argued that the more the Mormons are persecuted and driven about, the more rapidly the doctrine will prevail. He thought this the very means by which Mormonism is to be spread over the whole world. Here the "Saint" took his leave of us, and we moved on to the great Salt Lake City. Arrived here, we suspend our daily journal until we leave this place.

Distance, eight miles. From Fort Laramie to Salt Lake City, four hundred and seventy-five miles.

## CHAPTER IV.

Boundaries of the Valley.—Salt Lake.—Climate, Soil and Productions.—The City.—Protective Tariff.—Number of Mormons.—Customs and Character of the Mormons.—A Mormon Celebration.—Plurality of Wives.—Complaints of Emigrants.—Government.—Power of the Prophet.—Impudence of Brigham Young.—Mormon Theology.—Women enslaved at Salt Lake.—Hypocrisy and treachery of Mormons.—Treasonable and dangerous Designs.—Craft in gaining Converts.—Mormon Witnesses in Courts of Law.—A Mormon Law Case—Anecdote.—Right of Property.—High claims of Mormonism.—Persecution.

### BOUNDARIES OF THE VALLEY.

The principal settlement of the Mormons is in this valley, although they have small colonies at Utah Valley, at San Pete Valley, and in the southern part of Northern California. I write from personal observation, and my remarks will in this chapter be confined to Salt Lake Valley and its inhabitants.

The boundaries of this valley are not very definitely understood, but that portion lying on the east side of the lake, and which is occupied more or less by Mormons, is about one hundred miles in length, by twenty-five in breadth, bounded as follows:—on the east by a chain of mountains, on the north by Bear River, on the west by the lake, on the south by mountains separating it from Utah Valley. The whole face of the

country is an inclined plane, descending towards the lake.

#### SALT LAKE.

The river Jordan runs south of the city, and the Webber and Bear rivers to the north. Besides these there are a great number of smaller streams, some of which are of sufficient size for mills. These rise in the mountains on the east, and run with great rapidity towards the lake.

Salt Lake. This inland sea is one hundred miles in length, by seventy in breadth. The water is a perfect brine—as salt as cold water can be made by dissolving salt in it. No fish or other water animals inhabit it. The lake has no visible outlet. The water it receives from numerous rivers and streams is evaporated upon its expanded surface. The lake is said to be shallow, seldom more than thirty feet in depth.

During the rains in Winter and Spring, the water in the lake rises, spreading itself over the low lands which surround its margin. In the dry season the water evaporates, and receding, leaves immense deposits of crystallized salt upon the shores. The inhabitants have nothing to do in order to obtain their supply of this article, but to shovel it into their wagons, and transport the same to their homes. The salt is of an excellent quality, and any amount might be obtained. All North America might be supplied with salt from this great natural salt-pan; and the time may yet arrive, when, by means of rail roads, this useful commodity will be transported to all the States of this Great Republic.

This lake, in some of its characteristics, bears a striking resemblance to the Lake of Asphaltés, or the



Dead Sea in Palestine, upon the shores of which once stood the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah—which were doubtless destroyed by an earthquake and volcanic eruptions. There are, without doubt, subterranean fires in the region around the great Salt Lake, and the whole valley, including the lake, may possibly be an immense volcanic crater. Present appearances indicate that such is the fact.

In Utah Valley, fifty miles distant, is a large lake of fresh water, abounding in trout.

#### CLIMATE, SOIL, AND PRODUCTIONS.

The climate is healthy, and not remarkably warm at any season, the surface of the lake being four thousand feet higher than the level of the sea, and the frosty summits around have a tendency to cool the temperature. Snow sometimes falls to the depth of two feet in the valley, but does not lie long on the ground. There is an abundance of rain in the latter part of the Winter and Spring. A dry season then commences, which continues until Winter, during which time it seldom rains, though during my stay in the valley there was a copious shower in July, accompanied by thunder and lightning. It was considered by the Mormons as a remarkable occurrence. Almost every afternoon, during the dry season, there is a violent gale of wind. It comes on suddenly from the south, driving before it a great cloud of dust that darkens the air.

In many parts of the valley the soil is fertile, and produces abundant crops of small grain, potatoes, beans, peas, and all sorts of garden vegetables. It is necessary, however, to irrigate all the lands that are cultivated,

and streams being numerous, and the country an inclined plane, is admirably adapted to that purpose. Eighty bushels of wheat, I was told, had been produced from an acre of land. There is a belt of flat ground extending along the lake, too wet for cultivation; the soil is also strongly impregnated with salt and alkali.

Adjoining the city is a large enclosure, called the "Big Field." It is three miles wide, and fourteen miles long, fenced with small pine poles obtained from a neighboring canon. This field is surveyed off in lots of different sizes, which are improved by a great number of different proprietors. This field is nearly all the improved land in the vicinity, except that which is included within the limits of the city. Many persons who reside in the city, own claims in the Big Field.

The Mormons contemplate fencing another similar enclosure on the north side of the city, and extending along near the base of the mountains. There are several saw and grist-mills, propelled by water-power. But the most important improvements the Mormons have as yet made, are the numerous little canals, or ditches, for conveying water to the various tenements in the Big Field, and streets and lots in the city.

#### THE CITY.

The Capital City, or City of the Great Salt Lake, covers a large extent of ground, being laid out three miles square. It is divided into large squares, by broad streets crossing each other at right angles. Through each street runs one or two small canals of pure cold water, and they run with such velocity that their rush-

ing sound may be heard in all parts of the city. Water is thus brought to every man's door, and can be easily turned so as to water all the gardens and lots in the city. But a small proportion of the city lots are as yet improved, and the whole place resembles rather a neighborhood of farmers and mechanics, than a city, and the number of inhabitants may amount to five thousand.

There is but one place of public worship, and this is a mere temporary edifice, called the "Bowery," the length, one hundred feet, and breadth sixty. The walls are ten feet high, and made of unburnt brick. The roof is covered with boards, overspread with earth, and supported by a great number of posts or pillars, which are the rough bodies of small trees. It is seated with rough benches, and will contain, perhaps, two thousand persons, and is generally thronged on Sunday. There is also a two-story building, made of unburnt brick, called the "Council House," where the "powers that be" assemble to pass their decrees. There are private schools, but no public school-houses. There may be a dozen stores and trading establishments.

#### PROTECTIVE TARIFF.

All the merchandise used in the valley must be transported by land more than a thousand miles. From such a locality there can be no exports of the products of the soil, should there ever be a surplus. Farmers must depend entirely on a home market

This valley is a favorable spot in which to test the soundness of the protective policy. The distance bars competition from abroad as effectually as any pro-

protective tariff. But in this, as in all other instances of "protective tariffs," the same cause that shuts out importation, prevents exportation also. The tendency of all such protection is to destroy commerce, or the mutual interchange of the products of different countries for the advantage of both. Commerce is undoubtedly one great source of public wealth, as well as of private prosperity, and besides, promotes peace among nations, and is the most effectual means of spreading the knowledge of science, art, and civilization through the world.

#### NUMBER OF MORMONS.

The whole number of Mormons on the west side of the Rocky Mountains, is estimated at fifteen thousand. This estimate includes those in the valley and in California.

There is a small newspaper printed in the city, called "*The Deseret News*," devoted to Mormon interests, and apparently edited by persons of a low order of intellect; indeed, the paper is a mere childish affair.

#### CUSTOMS AND CHARACTER OF THE MORMONS.

The Mormons are very well clad at present. Clothing is cheap, being here sold by the emigrants for a mere trifle. Many emigrants start from the States with fine clothing, but by the time they arrive here discover that such apparel is of but little use on this journey, and are glad to get rid of it in exchange for some article of food.

The Mormons do not use intoxicating drinks. This apparent temperance proceeds rather from necessity than choice. There are no distilleries in the valley, and

the distance is too great to transport such commodities by land.

In their church they have a good choir of singers, and a brass band of musicians, who attend the meeting and play a variety of lively airs and marches after service.

The Mormons are a motley collection from all the countries of Europe; but the Americans form a majority, and are the master-spirits among them.

We do not hear a great amount of profane swearing at Salt Lake, though most of the Mormons will occasionally use a little of that dialect; and their preachers do not scruple to use such language in the pulpit as would be called profane if uttered in the streets.

#### A MORMON CELEBRATION.

The twenty-fourth day of July is observed by the Mormons as a grand festival. It is the anniversary of the arrival of the first train of the "Saints" in the valley, which memorable event occurred, I believe, in 1846. I had the curiosity to attend this celebration. Going up to the "Bowery," about nine in the morning, I found the house crowded to its utmost capacity, and many upon the outside who could not gain admission. At about ten o'clock, a singular procession was formed, consisting, in part, of the following select bodies:—

1st. The brass band, sixteen performers.

2d. Commissioned officers of the Nauvoo Legion, in full uniform.

3d. The twenty-four bishops of the church, in loose gowns, each carrying a motto painted on a board, and elevated at the top of a long staff.



4th. Twenty-four young ladies, with parasols tastefully ornamented with evergreens and flowers.

5th. Twenty-four young men.

7th. Apostles, elders, the patriarch, presidents, &c.

The procession then moved to the sound of music, and under the flag of Deseret, up to the residence of their high priest, prophet, president and governor, Brigham Young, and escorted this quondam dignitary down to the Bowery. At intermission, the procession escorted him home again. The performances lasted until near sunset, and consisted in praying, preaching, speech-making, &c. They read a paper, entitled "Declaration of the Independence of Deseret," and another, "The Constitution of Deseret." The Declaration of American Independence was also read. Numerous toasts were given, and odes were sung, which were the inspirations of the Salt Lake Muse. There was shouting, and firing of cannon, mingled with the flourish of trumpets, and strains from the brass band. They said many hard things against the Government and people of the United States, and heaped the most withering curses upon the States of Missouri and Illinois. They prophesied that the total overthrow of the United States was near at hand, and that the whole nation would soon be at the feet of the Mormons, suing for mercy and protection. Thus they spent the day. The speakers made free use of insulting language towards "Uncle Sam," and which might have given the old man great offence if he had heard it, and had thought it worthy of his notice.

Many emigrants attended this farce of a celebration, and after hearing all that was said, very generally came

to the conclusion that the Mormons, and especially their leaders, are a reckless set of desperados, and are a puny race of upstart traitors to their country.

There was a tall liberty pole, from which waved the flag of Deseret. The flag was thirty feet wide, and eighty feet long. A gale arose, the staff broke, and down came the flag, trailing in the dust. This little accident was matter of joy to most of the emigrants. I have never learned whether the inspired prophets in the valley considered the circumstance as a fortunate omen to the interests of Deseret, or otherwise.

Deseret, is the name given to the whole country by the Mormons. The legal name, imposed by the Congress of the United States, is Utah Territory.

#### PLURALITY OF WIVES.

Another singular practice that prevails here, is that of polygamy. They have papers, and even books among them, written in its defense. All the Mormons are bold in contending for polygamy by argument, and many are equally so in carrying it out in practice.

Brigham Young, the high priest, prophet, and governor, is said by those who have ample means of knowing, to have at this time twenty-three wives. To his seraglio additions are made from time to time. Eber Kimball, whom they style the vice-president, has near twenty wives. Secretary Richards, eight. The apostle Pratt, six, &c., &c.

For a general rule among them, the more religion a man has, the greater the number of his wives. One of the dignitaries in the valley has taken for wives a widow and several daughters, and it is not uncommon for a man to marry two or more sisters.

If the Government of the United States does not interpose its authority to correct some of the evils at Salt Lake, an incensed mob may ere long rush upon that sink of pollution, and sweep it with the besom of destruction. Such an event is quite probable, judging from the tone of popular indignation so generally uttered by the tens of thousands of emigrants who have been at the place.

The complaints against the Mormons urged by the emigrants, may be summed up as follows:—

#### COMPLAINTS OF EMIGRANTS.

1st. Imposing and collecting taxes from travelers, exorbitant in amount, assessed and collected in an illegal and arbitrary manner.

2d. Stripping them of their property on various false pretences, and when the injured have appealed to Mormon courts, the judgment has invariably gone in favor of the Mormon, whatever the value and amount of the testimony.

3d. That citizens of the United States have been sentenced to labor in the chain-gang, without having committed a crime, and without having a legal trial. They had spoken against the prophet.

4th. Liberty of speech has been destroyed in the valley, so that a man while there hazards his life by speaking against the proceedings of the Mormons.

5th. Breaking open letters, sent by citizens to their friends, in the United States Mail.

6th. That all their pretended courts of law are a cruel mockery of justice, the story of a Mormon, who is a party in the suit, far outweighing the disinterested testimony of emigrants under oath.

7th. Bigamy and incest, sanctioned by the united voice of the Mormon church and government.

8th. Treasonable designs against the United States. Pretending to be independent, and defying the Government.

9th. That the Mormon church is nothing but a banditti, and Brigham Young the captain.

10th. That their government and laws are but a cloak, under cover of which many emigrants have been robbed, the officers of these courts sharing the booty with the plunderers.

11th. That citizens of the United States have been murdered at Salt Lake, and Mormon courts have discharged the murderers with distinguished honor. As an instance, Dr. Vaughn, who was murdered in open day-light, near a crowd, in the Winter of 1850.

12th. That the Mormon rulers trample all justice and liberty under their feet, and American citizenship is no protection among them.

Such are a few of the many complaints uttered by California emigrants against the Mormons, and threatenings against the valley are loud and vehement. A military government ought to be established here, and then might justice be rendered both to Mormons and citizens of the United States.

#### GOVERNMENT.

The Government (if Government it can be called,) is a kind of military-ecclesiastical despotism. Their Chief, at present, is Brigham Young, the successor of Joe Smith. His powers, as a ruler of the Mormons, not being derived from the people, but like that of Mahomet, directly from God himself. He is a priest,

prophet, and virtually a king, his word being the end of the law in all cases. He holds in his hands the power of life and death over all persons in the valley, whether citizens or Mormons.

#### POWER OF THE PROPHET.

The prophet is commander-in-chief of the Nauvoo Legion, a numerous body of armed men, ready at all times to obey his orders, whether just or unjust. The Nauvoo Legion consists of all the men able to bear arms, who belong to their community. Besides this Legion, there is said to be a secret band, styled the "Danites," whose special mission is to execute vengeance on all those who have given offence to the prophet. Who are members of the "Danite" band, is unknown even to the mass of the Mormons, and all are said to stand in fear of secret agents and informers, as the people of Europe once stood in awe of the spies of the "Holy Court of Inquisition."

There is a kind of legislative body, consisting of bishops, elders, &c., over whom the chief priest presides.

Such is the Government, and all the Mormons seem determined to have no other; and it is all in vain for the President of the United States to appoint Governors or other territorial officers here. The Mormons will take salaries of office from the United States treasury if they can, but under all circumstances they will still adhere to their own system of government, law, religion, and practice. The Mormon community appears to be so corrupt and diseased a limb of the body politic, as to admit of no cure, except by amputation.



## IMPUDENCE OF BRIGHAM YOUNG.

The Mormons pretend to be republicans, but no government can be further from both republicanism and freedom than theirs. Brigham Young makes laws in general by his own authority, and personally promulgates them from the pulpit, in the style of a supreme dictator. I will give a specimen :

The first time I attended meeting in the Bowery, after a discourse by one of the apostles, Young arose and addressed the assembled throng, consisting of Mormons and emigrants, as follows:—"I understand that some of you Mormons have been selling wheat to the emigrants, and they want it to take out upon the plains to feed it to their teams. I forbid you doing this in future. If you presume to do so, I shall be likely to know it. I have means of finding out what is going on in this valley. You may sell them flour at twenty-five cents per pound, and not for a cent less. And this is for you, Mormons, to understand."

"Now, a word to the emigrants. I forbid you taking wheat from this place. If you have bought it, and have paid your money for it, it makes no difference. If you start on the road with it, and the fact comes to my knowledge, you will be pursued, brought back, and be made to smart for it, if there is force enough in this valley to do it. And this is for you, emigrants, to understand."

From this extract of the Governor's speech, the reader can "understand" how laws are made, and in what manner they are executed, at Salt Lake. The Governor owns a grist-mill. This circumstance may, in part, account for the terrible threatenings against those

who might take wheat away before it was ground. The reason assigned by the prophet for this summary non-exportation law, was the fear of a scarcity in the valley, but of that, there was no danger.

#### MORMON THEOLOGY.

As to Mormon theology, or system of religious belief, it is very difficult to describe. Their theory is a compound of all the creeds on earth—Jewish, Pagan, Mahomedan and Christian. I give a brief summary of their doctrines, gleaned from various conversations with the Mormons and their leaders :

1st. They believe in a multitude of Gods, each presiding over a certain portion of the material universe. I did not learn that they believed in any one Deity that was supreme over all the others. Whenever I asked direct questions on this point, I was always answered evasively.

2d. The only God with whom we in this planet are concerned, is the "Father of the human race," the Being who inspired men to write the Bible, and the Book of Mormon, upon the golden plates, discovered and translated miraculously by Joe Smith.

3d. A true Saint will hereafter arise from one degree of exaltation to another, until he finally becomes a God, and can create a world of his own, and people it with inhabitants.

4th. The personal form of God is precisely that of a human being.

5th. The power to work miracles is still possessed by all true believers, and such are the "Latter Day Saints," and no others.

6th. When Christ comes the second time, he will establish a temporal kingdom, and reign as a literal king over all the earth; and this king will re-establish the law of Moses, and priesthood of Aaron.

7th. Water baptism by immersion is an indispensable form of initiation into the visible kingdom of Christ, and when properly baptised, the disciple receives the Holy Ghost, and becomes the medium of miraculous power.

8th. A member of the church can be baptised in behalf of those who are literally dead, and who have died without receiving this ordinance, and such baptism is efficacious by way of substitution.

9th. Polygamy is a part of the ancient order of the church, and therefore still in force.

They style themselves Mormons, or Latter Day Saints; all others they denominate Gentiles, or heathen. They generally believe in a hell, of limited duration, but some hold that punishment is endless. They believe that when Christ comes personally to set up his kingdom, all obstinate Gentiles that may at that time be found will be swept from the world. They also hold that the present organization of the Church of Latter Day Saints is only a prelude to Christ's second coming and kingdom.

#### WOMEN ENSLAVED AT SALT LAKE.

All Mormons, both high and low, are quite flippant in defense of their doctrines and practices. This has been remarked in reference to many of the women among them, who appear to have a peculiar zeal in the cause. It is also said, that not a few of the women

would be glad to be free from this society. But the women are truly a conquered people at Salt Lake. If they have any misgivings of conscience, they dare not whisper their doubts in the ear of any mortal. Such is the despotic system under which they live.

The foregoing account of the Mormons, is in accordance with the best information I have been able to gain, and much of it the result of what I saw and heard personally. I wish them no harm, but at the same time apprehend that great evils will come upon them unless they reform, speedily, totally and radically.

#### HYPOCRISY AND TREACHERY OF MORMONS.

With reference to the religion of the Mormons, there is one consideration that is of importance to understand. Notwithstanding the Mormons profess to believe as much as all other sects put together, yet if the truth could be told, they are nearly all fully conscious that the whole scheme is a gross humbug and piece of deception, which they are attempting to palm upon the world. I would not state this, if I had not had an opportunity to ascertain the fact, by means of proofs which to my mind had the authority of a demonstration.

To state the process by which I arrived at this important information, would occupy too many pages for the present work. Many persons who are but little acquainted with the Mormons, are astonished that people can be so ignorant and superstitious as to believe in such things as Mormons profess. But let such astonishment cease, for not one in a hundred at Salt Lake is so ignorant as to believe in the system embraced in this theory, or any part of it. Why, then, do they pro-

fess to believe it? This question is more difficult to answer. I, however, will merely suggest, that their theory forms their bond of union—is an excuse for the gratification of their passions—is a cloak for all their iniquitous proceedings—fosters their ambitious love of power, and priestly domination—hence their attachment to their theory, and determined zeal in its defence. It is my opinion that the Mormon community are not a whit behind the times as to general intelligence. They are knaves, rather than fools. But they have designs to accomplish, and their theory of government and religion is the grand instrumentality in attaining the ends at which they aim.

As to myself, while I tarried at Salt Lake, I labored some in the wheat harvest, and gave a scientific lecture in the Bowery, and by these means raised money to prosecute my journey. On my arrival at Salt Lake, my funds were at rather a low ebb. I suffered a little from the tyranny of Brigham Young, but to relate my own private griefs is not the design of this work, and I therefore let them pass.

To conclude this subject, Mormonism amounts virtually, to sedition or treason against the National Government, as their theory declares that Mormons are not subject to any human government, and hence they feel themselves under no obligation to pay any respect to the civil laws, or to those who administer them. Whenever, therefore, they pretend to obey the laws of the nation, it is all a piece of hypocrisy, to gain some sinister end.



## TREASONABLE AND DANGEROUS DESIGNS.

Whenever the Mormons gain sufficient numbers, they will, without doubt, throw the mask entirely off, proclaim Utah an independent nation, and bid defiance to the United States. They have virtually done this already, and almost any Mormon at Salt Lake will tell you that such is their fixed determination; to bring all this about, is the object towards which all their operations are constantly directed.

They are determined to transform this free Republic into a despotism, with some Mormon prophet for an autocrat. Many Mormons seem to think that the time has already arrived, when the prophet's standard of defiance ought to be unfurled. But is there any reason to apprehend danger from the increasing numbers and power of this upstart sect? Answer: In 1850, the Mormon prophet at Salt Lake affirmed that their numbers, in all parts of the world, amounted to five hundred thousand. If this be a fact, Joe Smith has gained as great a number of followers in twenty-five years as Christianity gained in the first century of the Christian Era. Neither Christ or Mahomet gained converts like the Prophet of Nauvoo.

## CRAFT IN GAINING CONVERTS.

The means of proselyting put in requisition by the Mormons, are immense. Their missionaries are now scouring every quarter of the globe, and the isles of the ocean. As the result of these operations, thousands and tens of thousands of their proselytes are annually landed on our shores, and still the work proceeds with an accelerated velocity. At this rate, how long will it

be before Mormonism will become a tremendous power, directing the movements of a countless host of men, more dangerous in their principles than the followers of the Prophet of Mecca, or the murderous hordes that followed the bloody standards of Glengis and Tamerlane, and who, in the course of twenty years, destroyed fourteen millions of people in Asia.

An ancient Bible Prophet had a vision of a cloud, gathering in the midst of the clear blue sky. It was, at first, so diminutive in size, as scarcely to attract notice; but upon looking again, it had increased its dimensions, and continuing to enlarge, it soon became a mighty shower, and poured a deluge of water upon the parched earth. Thus Mormonism, like a portentous cloud, is gathering in blackness behind the Rocky Mountains. Being seen from so distant a point of observation, it appears so small that it scarcely attracts the notice of the Government, or the nation. Let this cloud alone a few seasons more, and suddenly it will darken all the western heavens, while from its dismal front a thousand lightnings will gleam, and its thunders shake the continent from sea to sea. A second race of Saracens, like swarms of African locusts, will overspread the land, stripping every green leaf from the tree of liberty.

But some will still ask, can there be danger of such progress in this work of darkness, under the resplendent light of the Nineteenth Century? In reply, I am willing to admit, that the present is an age of progress, and a great number of truly enlightened minds may be found in different countries. The distinguished writer and philosopher, Dr. Thomas Dick, estimates the number of the truly enlightened in Europe, at two

millions, or only one in one hundred and twenty-five of the population who are properly enlightened in the principles of science, morality and religion. This estimate leaves still in partial darkness, even in Europe, two hundred and forty-eight millions of human beings. If the philosopher even approximates the true number, you will perceive that abundant materials remain liable to become the devoted followers of vile impostors, and the zealous advocates of false and dangerous theories. But what is the secret of the wonderful success of the Mormon missionaries? I reply, it is not because they convince people of the truth of the Mormon theory of religion. As I stated before, there are few among them so ignorant as to believe in any part or portion of Mormon theology. The secret of this unparalleled success, consists in several particulars.

1st. All the preachers of Mormonism are a species of Jesuits. With them, the end sanctifies the means. As their theory embraces a part of every other, they can literally "become all things to all men," in theology, without going beyond the limits of the Mormon faith. Mormonism is not like an almanac, calculated for the meridian of some particular place, but will serve, without essential variation, for all latitudes, and all meridians from pole to pole.

2d. They hold out the promise of great temporal benefits. To the landless of Europe and America, they proffer farms without cost. They say to the European laborer, who is strongly predisposed to emigrate to the United States, join our church, adopt our principles, obey our leaders, and you shall be assisted to emigrate to a land fertile as Eden's primitive garden, and you

may have, without money, and without price, as much of the soil as you desire; and if sickness, or other misfortune, overtakes you, our whole community is bound to lend you its aid. These are convincing arguments, especially when addressed to the toiling peasantry of the Old World.

3d. The more opulent have the promise of office in the church, and various pecuniary advantages. At Salt Lake you may see many of these distinguished characters, living in the style of Turkish pachas, in spacious mansions, surrounded by smaller tenements, filled with the women composing their seraglios. Such arguments as these are sufficient to persuade many of the rich, unprincipled, and voluptuous, to become Mormons.

4th. Another argument constantly urged by these missionaries, is the bloody persecutions which have been endured by the Mormons in the States of Missouri and Illinois. This excites the sympathy of people not acquainted with the circumstances. But if the facts were made known, all would discover that the Mormons have far less right to complain of persecution, than have the inmates of our penitentiaries. Instead of being persecuted, they have not as yet received at the hands of the people a tenth part of their just and legal deserts.

5th. Another means of building up and sustaining their Society. It is said that most Mormons, male and female, belong to a secret, mystic order, in some particulars resembling Free Masonry, but without a charter from any regularly established Grand Lodge. Of this order, the prophet is Grand Master. They have

their signs and pass-words, by which they are known to each other. Their allegiance to this order is superior to any obligation that can be imposed upon them to support the Government of the United States, and stronger than any judicial oath imposed by any magistrate who is not a Mormon.

#### MORMON WITNESSES IN COURTS OF LAW.

It is difficult to convict a Mormon of sedition, or any other crime, when arraigned before the legal tribunals in the United States. Indeed, it is impossible to obtain judgment against them in such cases, as long as Mormon testimony is received. Such is my opinion, and I should have no confidence at all in Mormon witnesses in any supposable case, excepting in a case where one Mormon swears against another. Joe Smith was repeatedly tried on charges of sedition, or treason, but invariably cleared by Mormon testimony. Such will always be the result, in any attempt at legal proceedings against that people, as long as Mormon testimony is received.

The Mormons were once driven from the State of Missouri, partly by the mob, and partly by the State authorities. They then took refuge in Illinois, fixing their seat of power at Nauvoo, on the Mississippi river. Here they flourished for a time, but soon came in collision with the people, who, after enduring their insults, and suffering from their depredations many years, at length expelled the Ishmaelitish crew from the State, at the point of the sword. This was done by the people, without legal authority. But these people have not been persecuted for "righteousness sake," but for



the want of righteousness. These Mormons have often been attacked by mobs. The reason of this is obvious. The people became satisfied that the civil law is absolutely powerless to do justice in reference to Mormons.

Their seat of power is now located in Utah Territory, where they have the entire control; and it remains to be seen, how long it will be before they are found in opposition to the General Government. Unless they abandon their theory of law and legislation, it will be impossible for them to remain for any great length of time at peace with the Nation.

#### A MORMON LAW-CASE—ANECDOTE.

The Rev. Mr. Slater, a California emigrant, was one who stayed at Salt Lake during the Winter of 1850-'51, and afterwards published a pamphlet, in California, illustrating the workings of the Mormon system. The following anecdote is selected from his publication, and it will give the reader some idea of the manner in which justice is administered at Salt Lake. The correctness of Slater's statements were confirmed by the signatures of five hundred California emigrants.

“In the course of the Winter, an emigrant bought a horse of a Mormon, for which he paid one hundred dollars. Some time after this, the horse was missing. The owner made search for it, without success, and finally came to the conclusion that the animal was lost beyond recovery. After a while, the emigrant found his horse in the possession of another emigrant. Says the first emigrant, “I would like to know by what means you have obtained possession of my horse?” The second replied, “I bought the horse of a Mormon,

and paid one hundred dollars for it." On further investigation, it was found that both these emigrants had bought the same identical horse, of the same identical Mormon, and had paid for the same an hundred dollars each! These emigrants proceeded to prosecute the Mormon who had sold the horse. The cause came up for trial before a Mormon Magistrate, there being, of course, no other in the country. It was proved, by the disinterested testimony of emigrants, under oath, that the said Mormon sold that identical horse to both these emigrants. On the side of the defendant, no witnesses were called; but the defendant himself, who had sold the horse, made a statement before the Court, declaring, positively, that he had never owned or sold that particular horse, and had never seen the animal before.

The inspired Magistrate proceeded to sum up the testimony, and declare the sage judgment of the Court. It was doubtful, in his Honor's opinion, whether either of the parties had ever owned the said horse. The Court, therefore, ordered the animal to be sold, forthwith, to pay the cost. The judgment was promptly executed, and the horse was sold, at once, by the public Crier.

Multitudes of similar illustrations of Mormon jurisprudence might be given.

The Mormon theory and practice in relation to the rights of property, may be stated as follows:—

#### RIGHTS OF PROPERTY.

- 1st. The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.
- 2d. The Saints shall inherit the Earth.
- 3d. The Mormons are the Saints of the Most High.

4th. The Mormons are the real owners of all the property on Earth, and therefore have a perfect right to take possession of the same, whenever they have power to do so, and can do it with safety to themselves.

#### HIGH CLAIMS OF MORMONISM.

The Mormons claim to live under a theocracy, or Government of God, and hence owe no allegiance to any mere human authority. The decrees of Brigham Young, and the acts of their Legislature, are spoken of by them as revelations from God, in which there can be no error. Magistrates, and other officers, claim to be inspired, and to act under direction from on High. Hence they dispense with written laws, in general, and hold all law books in supreme contempt. They have nothing to do with reports of cases, precedents, or commentaries upon the law. I have heard Brigham Young, in public, scout the very idea of a written law, or law book.

#### PERSECUTION.

If the Mormons have been persecuted, as they pretend, yet we would wish to have it distinctly understood, that they have not suffered these things for their opinions, but for their deeds of darkness and of crime. Doubtless, many well-disposed people have joined the Mormons through ignorance of the principles upon which the Society is founded ; but can honest men and women remain with them, after they become initiated into the secrets of the Order ?

## CHAPTER V.

Determination to leave.—Move from the City.—Warm and Hot Springs.—Dancing Prophet and Priests.—Webber River—Wild Fruit—Salt Springs.—A long Promontory.—Optical Illusion.—Huge Crickets—Strange Toads—Birds.—Wonderful Springs.—Subterranean Fires—Volcanic Crater.—River running beneath a Mountain.—Glimpse of the Lake—Warm Springs.—A Sink—Sage Bush.—Great Central Basin Described.—Returning Mormon Train.—Insufficient Arms.—Carson's Creek—Shoshonee Indians.—Towering Monuments.—Grand Prospect. Behind the great Crowd.—Carcases, Vultures, and Wolves.—Valley of Dry Bones.—Total Abstinence.—Hot Springs—Clouds of Steam.—A Strange Carriage—Indians.—A Warning—The Humboldt.—Indian Camp—Trout.—Indian Murders—Returning Train.—Splendid Hot Spring.—A Thieving Indian—Dangerous Ground.—Jerking Beef.—The Humboldt—Indian Battle.—Traffic—A Library in the Desert.—Indian Depredations.—A Corpse found, and buried.—Hot Springs—An Emigrant killed.—Three Men killed.

### DETERMINATION TO LEAVE.

Thursday, August 29th, 1850.—At one time, I had almost come to the conclusion to stop at Salt Lake through the Winter. The Mormons tried to discourage all emigrants who were going to the mines. They told us that Salt Lake was a far better country, in which to earn money, than California; that the journey to the mines was horrible, beyond all description, and that it was altogether too late in the season, now, to start, and that, without doubt, we should be buried in snow on

the mountains. About one thousand emigrants were, by such arguments, induced to tarry in the valley until Spring. They afterwards lamented the day on which they came to that fatal determination. But these had not chanced, as yet, to obtain a distinct view of the "Mormon elephant."

I have since learned from great numbers of those who stayed in the valley through the Winter, that in general they were well treated by the Mormons, until cold weather set in, rendering it impossible to go forward on their journey, then their conduct towards the Gentiles was totally reversed, and they afterwards found no sympathy, friendship, or justice in the proceedings of the "Saints." The Mormons then adopted a policy, in relation to the emigrants, of the most cruel and heartless character.

A few of us had seen enough, already, to satisfy us that no real favors could be expected from Mormons. We were totally disgusted with a place where petty, upstart tyrants reigned without control, and rather than stay any longer, we chose to encounter the fatigues of the journey—the terrors of the Indian's scalping-knife—and the avalanches of snow among the mountains. If we lived to get through, we were in hopes of arriving in a country which was, at least, under the protecting wing of the American Eagle. I hired my passage on board a wagon, drawn by three yoke of oxen, all in good condition. My immediate associates were two Swedes, and three Americans.

#### MOVE FROM THE CITY.

At three o'clock, afternoon, we left the Mormon city, without a tear of regret, and moved onward, taking the



northern route to California, which leads around the northern extremity of the great Salt Lake.

#### WARM AND HOT SPRINGS.

At the north side of the city we passed the Warm Spring. The water is somewhat warmer than blood-heat, is transparent, and affords a large quantity. It is a medicinal spring, of the chalybeate kind, similar to the Harrowgate Springs in England, or the Massena Springs, in St. Lawrence County, New York. There is a bathing-house erected here, which is owned by a Mormon Bishop.

Four miles further on, we passed the Hot Spring. The temperature is near the boiling point. The spring issues from the base of a rock, which is a projection from the mountain, filling a basin, of twelve feet across, and of unknown depth. The stream from the spring is of sufficient size to carry a grist-mill, over which boiling flood we pass on a slight bridge. Our road runs along the base of the chain of mountains which forms the eastern boundary of Salt Lake Valley. The mountain is on our right hand, and an inclined plane between us and the lake, on our left.

At dark, came into a large Mormon settlement, and encamped. A Mormon here tried to persuade us to give up our present undertaking, but we were, at this time, proof against any persuasion coming from such a source. Distance, eleven miles.

#### DANCING PROPHET, AND PRIESTS.

August 30th.—Our road is fine, and perfectly level, and is seldom more than a mile distant from the moun-

tain. In the afternoon, we met a number of fine carriages, on board of which was the Governor, and the leaders of the Mormons; also, a number of ladies, and the brass band. We understood that this party had been up to Webber river, for the purpose of fixing upon a site, upon which to build another city. The party, on the way up, stopped one night with a brother Mormon, by the name of Brown, where they had a ball, or dance, in the evening, to the music of the violin, the Chief Priest and Prophet leading off the head of the figure. The Divine Blessing was invoked, in a short prayer, before commencing this pious exercise. The custom of opening a ball with prayer, is general among these "Latter Day Saints." Whether this mingling of praying, fiddling, and dancing, is altogether proper, I shall not undertake to determine.

At sun-set, arrived on the bank of Webber river, and encamped in a grove of poplars. In this vicinity is an extensive settlement of Mormons.

Distance, twenty-nine miles.

#### WEBBER RIVER—WILD FRUIT—SALT SPRINGS.

August 31st.—Started early, and forded Webber river, which is now very low, and has but little resemblance to this turbulent stream, when we crossed it on the eighth of July. At eleven o'clock, passed the last house we expect to see, for the distance of seven hundred miles.

Before noon, we passed a great number of springs of hot salt water, from which the streams flow down upon the plain towards the lake, and expand into numerous shallow ponds, the surface of which, as seen from the

road, appear to be encrusted with salt. A white bank of the same article lies around their margins.

We encamped soon after noon, on the bank of a creek of cold, fresh water, where we found a grove of English Black Haws. The trees were bent beneath the load of ripe fruit, and we gathered a bushel or two for future use. We here overtook a number of emigrant teams, and were glad to find that we were not the only travelers upon this lonesome road. Distance, fifteen miles.

#### A LONG PROMONTORY.

September 1st.—Sunday.—Still pursuing our course, at the base of the mountain, which rises like a wall of naked rocks on our right. Towards the northern end of the lake, I perceive that a high mountain promontory makes out from the shore, in a direction nearly south, almost dividing the lake into two parts. This promontory cuts off the prospect, so that we can see only the sheet of water between it and the eastern shore. This sheet varies in width from five to twenty-five miles. At the city we can see past the southern extremity of the cape, and obtain a view of the broad expanse beyond it. The lake is there of such extent, that the sun seems, at setting, to sink beneath its briny waves.

#### OPTICAL ILLUSION.

I will here state a fact that has been noticed by all persons who have traveled the overland route to California. In all the mountain region through which we pass, the space between us and any distant object seems diminished in a remarkable manner. An object is

really four or five times further off than you would judge, until by experience you learn to estimate distances in this singular region of the globe.

The philosophic cause of this phenomena, may be the abruptness and height of the mountains, and the thinness and transparency of the atmosphere.

We have seen no wild game, except rabbits, since leaving the city. Wolves have serenaded us at night, and there are said to be brown and grisly bears in the mountains.

#### HUGE CRICKETS—STRANGE TOADS—BIRDS.

Black crickets, of enormous size, are numerous in all the barren tracts; also, a species of lizard, and toads with horns and tails decorated with bright and variegated colors. There are but few birds in this valley, of the same species as those found in the States. Crows and buzzards are, however, sufficiently numerous. Sage hens bear some resemblance to the prairie chickens of the Western States, though they are much larger, and better food when cooked.

#### WONDERFUL SPRINGS.

To-day we passed a great number of springs, that would have been regarded as great curiosities, if met with in any other country except this. Many of these springs were boiling hot, and held in solution the greatest possible amount of salt. They burst from the rocks near the base of the mountain. The water is very transparent. Several teams took on board their wagons kegs of this water, for the purpose of seasoning food, and preserving meat. In some places, we noticed

both hot and cold springs issuing from the rocks quite near together. In one instance, at least, there is a large spring of boiling salt water, that pours out of a chasm in the rock not more than two inches from one that is both cold and fresh. A sheet of rock divides the streams; they both fall into and mingle in the same basin. There is a constant succession of these springs for a mile or two, and they form a strange variety, being of all temperatures, from extreme cold to boiling heat, and of every grade of saltness.

#### SUBTERRANEAN FIRES—VOLCANIC CRATER.

It would seem that this whole region rests upon subterranean volcanoes, and at some future day a fiery deluge may fill the entire valley of Salt Lake with a sea of molten lava. This would be to the modern Sodom a fate like that which we are told in ancient times befel the cities of the plain. If such a catastrophe should happen, and if in their flight, any Mormon should look behind, he might easily be turned to a pillar of salt, if he should chance to fall into certain springs along this road.

At a late hour we arrived on the bank of Bear river, and encamped. Distance, twenty-five miles.

#### RIVER RUNNING BENEATH A MOUNTAIN.

September 2d.—Fordeled Bear river early in the morning. This is the same terrible stream that we crossed, seventy miles before arriving at Salt Lake. Where we now cross, is twenty miles from its entrance into the lake; it is twenty rods wide, and four



feet deep, running swiftly over a bed of pebbles. We got through without accident.

The Mormons say that this river runs through a subterranean passage for many miles, under a chain of mountains that forms the eastern boundary of the valley, and that its egress into the plain is at no great distance above this ford. A considerable share of the water of this stream, after passing the ford, sinks in the sandy plain before it reaches the lake.

#### GLIMPSE OF THE LAKE—WARM SPRINGS.

After crossing the river, our course lay for several miles across a dusty plain to the south-west, and then over a bench of high land, which is the southern terminus of a chain of mountains that stretch far to the north. We then came down into a fine valley, two miles wide, and turning to the north-west, ascended, gradually, seven miles. The hills on each side are of moderate elevation, smooth on the surface, and covered with green grass. The whole presents quite a pleasing landscape. We caught, for the last time, a distant glimpse of the great Salt Lake, about fifteen miles to the south. We are, therefore, passing the northern extremity of the lake.

Toward evening, descended an inclined plane six miles, and encamped near a multitude of warm springs, all of which are slightly tinctured with salt. Where they rose from the ground, they were rather too warm for cattle to drink, but by following the streams downward, we found water sufficiently cool for that purpose. Distance, twenty-four miles.

## A SINK—SAGE BUSH.

September 3d.—Took a north-westerly course, winding among hills of moderate height; high, snowy mountains visible to the south-west. Three teams, only, in company with us. One great annoyance in traveling this road at this season, is the dust. The tramping of the cattle raises clouds that often conceal the whole train from sight. This dust seems to be composed of a soil naturally fertile, but perfectly dried by the long drouth of Summer, whilst the vast amount of travel has pulverised it, to the width of fifty feet, to the fineness of flour. Being so very light, the least touch, or gale of wind, sets masses of it in motion.

We came on to Sink Creek, that runs from a large spring of good water. The stream issues from a canon in a neighboring mountain, and running a course of three miles into a beautiful little valley, the water spreads itself over the ground, and sinks, or is evaporated, thus irrigating two or three hundred acres of land, which, in consequence, yields a luxuriant crop of grass.

Passing along, we arrived at Deep Creek, and encamped among sage bushes, which cover all the surrounding prospect, except a narrow strip of bottom-land along the stream. Distance, eighteen miles.

September 4th.—The sage bush is the main article for fuel, for more than a thousand miles of this journey. Being of such importance to travelers, it may merit a brief description :

The leaves, when green, have a resemblance to those of the garden sage. A large number of stalks grow crowded together in a thick cluster, and are from two

to eight feet high, and some of them are six inches in diameter, tapering rapidly towards the top. It is a shrub. The grain is remarkably winding, and the leaves have a strong aromatic smell. The wood has an agreeable odor, similar to that of beeswax, and when dry, is nearly of the same color. I have often heard it affirmed, that a decoction of the root, of two years' growth, is a real specific for land scurvy. There is an abundance of dry stalks in most places, which being very combustible, are especially convenient in raising a sudden fire. Millions of acres in our vast interior are covered with this shrub. It would be difficult to cross the desert plains without its aid, as there is but a trifling amount of timber besides. Among these bushes, we quite commonly find, here and there, a scattering blade of grass, which seems to be of a very nutritious quality. Cattle can barely subsist upon it when they can do no better. Distance, eighteen miles.

#### GREAT CENTRAL BASIN DESCRIBED.

September 5th.—The interior of the North American Continent is, for a general rule, nothing more than a desert, with here and there an oasis. The extent of this tract must amount to more than a million of square miles, being more than one thousand miles in length and breadth. I am satisfied that the cause of this eternal barrenness is the want of rain. The soil is generally of such a nature, that irrigation would render it highly productive. Much of this vast tract is destitute of springs, or streams, hence can never be irrigated, and therefore seems condemned, by a decree of Nature, to everlasting sterility.

We moved along six miles, and arrived at an oasis, at the sink of Deep Creek, where we concluded to rest through the day and recruit the teams. Here we find more than a square mile of green grass, full waist high. Deep Creek is a good-sized mill stream, until it arrives at this place, where its waters spread around and sink in the plain, near its center, which plain is a desert, about twenty miles across.

Having leisure to-day, I will give a general description of the region usually styled the "Great Basin," in which we are now traveling.

The Basin is bounded by the Sierra Nevada Mountains on the west, and by the mountains east of Salt Lake on the east, the Oregon mountains on the north, whilst a chain of high mountains limit the Basin to the south. The whole is in somewhat of a square form, from six to eight hundred miles on each side, and nearly four thousand miles in circuit. The mountain chains by which it is entirely surrounded, are styled the "Rim of the Basin." No streams or rivers that take their rise within the Rim, can make their way out, except by evaporation, or by sinking in the deserts. The great Salt Lake itself is only an immense sink, where several rivers and numerous streams are swallowed up.

Many people conceive of the Great Basin, as of an immense plain, or at least as somewhat of a level country, having the Salt Lake in the center. Salt Lake, however, is near the eastern limit of the Basin, and so far is the country from being a plain, that, on the contrary, it consists of a vast assemblage of barren hills and mountains, running in every possible direction, many of which are as lofty as the rim of the Basin itself.

Dispersed' around among these mountains, are innumerable canons, and valleys, some grassy plains, and many barren deserts of wide extent. A road has been sought out which winds around through valleys and defiles, and never ascends a mountain, where it is possible to get along any other way.

#### RETURNING MORMON TRAIN.

In the course of the day, a small train of Mormons passed us on their return from California. They gave us very discouraging accounts of what we may expect on the road, and even after we get to the gold region. These Mormons had, doubtless, received orders from the head prophet at Salt Lake to discourage, as much as possible, all California emigrants.

A few hours afterward, another train of returning Californians passed by. These last were not Mormons. They are direct from the mines, and their accounts are quite encouraging. They say that gold is plenty there, and food and clothing abundant.

We have now eight wagons, and forty men in company. The nights are cold and frosty.

Distance, six miles.

September 6th.—Proceeded due west over an extensive plain, surrounded on all sides by high mountains, except a narrow opening towards the north-west. At noon, halted at Pilot Springs. They burst out of the level desert, and after a course of half a mile, sink again in the dusty plain. In the afternoon, rose several successive terraces of land, up to near the base of a mountain, where we encamped by the side of several



good springs. Two Shoshonee Indians came to our camp on horseback, armed with rifles, and stayed with us a part of the night. It is now judged necessary to guard our cattle at night, to prevent theft by the Indians. Our company is small, and the duty severe. The whole declivity of the mountain below us, and stretching far to the right and left, is studded over with clumps of cedar trees, twelve or fifteen feet high, with large round tops, giving the whole landscape the appearance of an immense orchard. Among these sequestered shades, we saw a new grave of a man who died of sickness on the twenty-first of August.

Distance, eighteen miles.

#### INSUFFICIENT ARMS.

September 7th.—Breakfasted on rabbit soup; these animals being numerous, and of large size, in this quarter. Proceeding along the bench of land, through scattering groves, we soon came to an open, undulating plain, destitute of all vegetation except the everlasting sage, and greasewood bushes. A mountain, ten miles to the south, shows large bodies of snow near its summit. Crossed a fine, clear creek, twelve feet wide, and soon after descended an inclined plane eight miles, and encamped near the sink of a very small stream, where we found a scant supply of grass. We are now only four wagons and twenty men, in company, and are poorly armed. Among us are only five rifles, and two pistols. We are in a bad condition to fight a battle with the Indians, should we have occasion to do so.

Distance, eighteen miles.

## CASSIUS CREEK—SHOSHONEE INDIANS.

September 8th.—Started at eight o'clock. Crossed Cassius Creek, twenty feet wide, and two feet deep. Followed the stream downwards, through a lengthy defile, among detached, conical mountains. Grass plenty growing on the bottom land, along the creek. After this, we emerged into an extensive plain, covered as usual, with sage bushes. There is a snowy mountain about twelve miles to the north. Several Shoshonee Indians visited us, for the purpose of trading and begging for food. Our charity in dealing out provisions is becoming very stinted,—it begins and ends at home.

We encamped at four o'clock, on the bank of Cassius Creek. There is a range of mountains directly in front of us, through some gorge of which, I suppose our road will lead us. Distance, fourteen miles.

## TOWERING MONUMENTS—GRAND PROSPECT.

September 9th.—Sunday.—Leaving the creek and turning to the right, ascended an inclined plain for several miles, then two miles through a defile, or mountain pass, which soon descended into a valley, in which we passed the junction of the Fort Hall and Salt Lake roads. A short distance from the junction, are the noted Steeple Rocks, between two of which runs the Fort Hall road, the pass being barely sufficient to crowd a wagon through. In sight of, and near our road, are two tall and sharp pointed columns, two or three hundred feet in apparent height, their forms being regular and beautifully elongated cones. Here are monuments erected by the hand of Nature, rivaling in grandeur

Trajan's Pillar, or Cleopatra's Needle. Further back on the Fort Hall road, I am told is a succession of these steeples, filling a narrow valley for two or three miles. We now ascended, for the distance of four miles, and found ourselves on the summit of a ridge of mountains. A prospect bounded only by the power of vision, now burst upon the sight. A broad valley stretching north and south, lay at our feet, and, perhaps two thousand feet below us. A long stream, called Goose Creek, winds its way through the valley, which is studded over with a countless number of hills, of beautiful and fantastic forms. To the west of this interminable vale is a vast amphitheater, of mountains, rising in successive chains behind each other, the most distant, overlooking the whole, and appearing like the faint glimpse of a cloud, with pointed summits stretching along the horizon. Taken, all in all, it was one of the most sublime pieces of mountain scenery I have as yet surveyed in this region of wonders. We now descended five miles a fearful steep, and in many places, we had to chain all the wheels, and assemble all our force to hold the wagons back.

In one place, we descended a hill for about a mile, composed wholly of a substance resembling burnt lime, or magnesia. It is as light as corkwood, and being in the road pulverised to perfect fineness by the travel, the wheels sink in it to the depth of nearly two feet, raising an immense white cloud of dust. We encamp on the banks of Goose Creek, the grass green, but short as possible.

In the creek we found great numbers of the carcasses of dead horses and cattle. It requires some little prac-

tice to relish a beverage in which putrescent flesh has been for months steeping. But here we have no choice.

Distance, twenty miles.

#### BEHIND THE GREAT CROWD.

By tarrying so long at Salt Lake, we find ourselves far in the rear of the great emigrant crowd, this having passed along nearly two months since, and ere this time, has, for a general rule, arrived in California.

At this time, there are none on the road, except here and there small, straggling parties, which, from various causes, have been hindered in their progress. Such is the fact in reference to ourselves. We seem to be almost alone, compared with the endless throngs among which we travelled in June and July. There was no danger from Indian hostilities while a vast army constantly crowded the way. But the case is now quite different. We are in small companies at present, and separated by wide distances from each other. Our dispersed situation gives the Indians every facility of annoying us, if they have a disposition to do so. "Eternal vigilance," is our only safety.

#### CARCASES, VULTURES AND WOLVES.

At six in the morning we moved along in a southerly direction, following up the creek, occasionally ascending hills to avoid bends in the stream. Since falling into the Fort Hall road, we find a greatly increased number of the carcasses of dead animals. Crows, hawks, and buzzards, fare sumptuously, and collect along the road in great numbers. Wolves also come in for a share, and bands of these animals around our encampments, greet us with their nocturnal serenades.

In the afternoon we passed a hot spring, the water not quite up to the boiling point. We encamp on the bank of the stream, upon the green and level bottom.

Distance, eighteen miles.

#### VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

September 10th.—Leaving Goose Creek, we followed a branch of the same up through a canon, then descended into a valley barren of all vegetation, and strewed with carcasses and bones, rendering it as unpromising in appearance as that notable valley seen by the Prophet Ezekiel in his vision. We passed two springs of water, but through the reckless obstinacy of the men who owned the teams, we took no water on board, and we saw neither grass or water until nearly noon the next day, suffering much from thirst, and being out of bread, and having no liquid with which to mix the flour. The valley in which we are traveling is nearly level, having upon the right and left hand a stupendous amphitheater of naked, barren mountains. Numerous graves of emigrants are here scattered along by the wayside, and the effluvia of dead animals fills the surrounding atmosphere. Encamped at eleven o'clock at night, in the midst of a desert, without either grass or water.

Distance, thirty-three miles.

#### TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

September 11th.—Started early, following up the smooth and level valley. At eleven o'clock, ascending a canon a short distance, came to grass and several springs of good water. We were glad to call a halt here and cook a breakfast, having practiced "total abstinence"



from food, as well as from drink, for thirty hours.— Snowy mountains are in sight, about fifty miles to the south. Our course is south-west. After a hearty repast, moved on five miles to a very good camping place on Coldwater Creek, a small stream. About fifteen miles further on, we can see the terminus of this long valley, in which we have been moving for several days. Much of the ground in this quarter is covered with saleratus and soda. Our fuel, along here, has been sage, greasewood, and wagons, that have been abandoned on the way.

The greasewood shrub bears no resemblance to the sage; the stalks are smaller, the leaves thick, resembling pine, having a tuft of yellow flowers at the end of each twig. Distance, sixteen miles.

#### HOT SPRINGS—CLOUDS OF STEAM.

September 12th.—Started at sunrise, following along the level border of the stream. We soon came to a large cluster of boiling hot springs. There may be an hundred or more of these springs. They rise from a quagmire near the road. The morning being cold, a great cloud of steam arose from them, as from a number of steamboats.

A drove of about thirty antelopes ran past us, at a distance of half a mile. Several hunters started out and attempted to head them, by taking a turn around a hill, but not succeeding in this, gave up the chase, and did not overtake the teams, until we had proceeded about twelve miles. We now left the valley, and passing over a low chain of mountains, following up one canon and down another into a small valley, having a small stream,

which we think must be Canon Creek, a tributary of the Humboldt river. Snow-covered peaks ten miles to the south. Distance, twenty miles.

September 13th.—Proceeded eight miles over undulating barrens, covered with sage and greasewood, then descended into a level valley, abounding in grass, where we found a number of springs, or rather deep basins filled with water, having no visible outlets. Several Indians were strolling about the valley. At five in the evening, came to the bank of a creek, and encamped near the western base of one of the snowy peaks we saw in the morning. We are in doubt whether the stream is Canon Creek, or Humboldt river, near its head. Numerous mountains glimmering with snow are now seen in all directions, except the north.

Distance, eighteen miles.

#### A STRANGE CARRIAGE—INDIANS.

September 14th.—Moved down the level bottom which now appears to be three or four miles in breadth. The stream occasionally sinks in the ground, and after a mile or two again re-appears. About noon stopped on the bank of the creek, one mile from the road.

At this place we saw a singular vehicle drawn by two horses. It belonged to a man from Milwaukee, who, in company with two men, were traveling with it to California. It was a cart, having tire a foot wide, and two sets of spokes to each wheel. The bed was an immense tin box, made water-tight, having a framework upon the inside, to strengthen it. The owner was forming a guide-book, for the use of future travelers, and

within the huge tin box, was a roadometer of an ingenious construction. When they started, the carriage had six wheels, all of the same construction, and was drawn by six horses, besides which, there was a curious piece of machinery fixed within the bed for the purpose of propelling this strange locomotive by hand, in case the horses should fail. Six men had agreed to take passage on board this carriage, but three of them had backed out before starting. At this time, he had lost four of his horses, and had cut down the ponderous chariot to a cart for two horses. He had expended near two thousand dollars to get started in this way, and now seemed to be in somewhat reduced circumstances. He had evidently been the author of an unprofitable invention, although a man of extensive scientific knowledge, and of great mechanical ingenuity. His horses were now low in flesh, and his cart quite too heavy a load for them to draw.

Fifteen or twenty half-naked Indians visited us to day, some on foot, and others on horseback, armed with rifles, bows and arrows. These last are constructed with great ingenuity; the bowstrings are the twisted and dried sinews of animals. The bows are short, not exceeding three feet in length, the arrows being about two feet long, to the hind end of which, is fastened a small tuft of feathers, the point being a sharp two edged blade of iron, well polished, though some are pointed with glass. An Indian will send an arrow with such force, as to pierce a man's body completely through. The bow and arrow seems to be nearly as deadly a weapon, as the rifle or musket. The bow has one advantage in battle; they can send a dozen arrows in the time necessary for

charging or loading a rifle once. When a band of Indians make an attack at a suitable distance, their arrows fill the air like a storm of hail.

#### A WARNING—THE HUMBOLDT.

To-day we picked up a paper near the road, signed with eight names, cautioning travelers to beware of the Indians, and stating that two of their men were shot by these Diggers, while guarding their cattle at night. Encamped near the stream, which is now thirty feet wide, and two feet deep. We are satisfied that this is none other than the river Humboldt, named after the illustrious traveler and philosopher, the Baron Humboldt. Distance, sixteen miles.

#### INDIAN CAMP—TROUT.

September 15th.—Sunday.—Lay by for the purpose of resting the teams, cooking, &c. The river bottom is now three or four miles in width, very level, and runs in a direction from northeast to southwest. There is no timber except willows, which fringe the brink of the stream, and as usual, sage and greasewood upon the bench of land between the bottom and the mountains to the right and left. We can also see a few dwarf cedars and pines, at a great distance in the canons that open into the valley.

During the day, three of our men went out to an Indian encampment, where they saw fifty or more of these Diggers, male and female, old and young, all being nearly destitute of clothing. They had several hundred of the finest trout, a fish about twelve inches in length. A number of the Indians were fishing in the

river near by, with scoop-nets, and seemed to have a perfect understanding of the business, and to take the fish with great facility. These Indians seemed friendly, invited the men to go into the camp, and gave them some of their broiled trout. Their style of cooking fish was peculiar. They were thrown alive into the fire as soon as taken from the water, without any seasoning or dressing at all. They also treated the men with choke cherries. Where they found this fruit, I know not, as we have seen no choke cherry bushes in this region.

#### INDIAN MURDERS—RETURNING TRAIN.

September 16th.—Came on eight miles and halted, after crossing a considerable creek, near its entrance into the Humboldt. On the road, met a crowd of Indians, and found eight or ten more at our stopping place. These Indians appeared quite impudent and ferocious. One of them attempted to take away one of our rifles without liberty. But we finally succeeded in wrenching it from his grasp. At this time, I believe a fight would have ensued, had the Diggers been sufficiently numerous. These Indians had brawny limbs, and apparently, great strength and activity. We here found a paper posted up, informing us that two men were killed by the Indians near this spot, a few days since. Their bodies were found by a party of emigrants, who came along afterwards, and by whom they were here interred.

Pursuing our way, in the course of the afternoon met a wagon train of thirty or forty persons returning from California. Their report, in general, is favorable, though they seem to think we are quite too late to cross



the mountains without difficulty. Distance, sixteen miles.

#### SPLENDID HOT SPRING.

September 17th.—At ten in the morning, saw numerous columns of what appeared like smoke, rising over the bushes, at the distance of a mile to the left, and near the river. We supposed it to be a large Indian encampment, but moving on around a bend in the stream, we perceived that the smoke was nothing but steam that arose from a great number of boiling hot springs. Mr. West, and myself waded the river, for the purpose of taking a look at these curiosities. The water in these springs is fresh, and beautifully transparent. Several gush from apertures in a ledge which forms the southern bank, whilst many others rise from a sandy beach near the stream. Two of the latter are splendid specimens. One is a round basin, twelve feet across, and eight feet deep, having a round open aperture at the bottom, as if bored with an auger, through which the boiling water rises to the surface with considerable force. The other is similar in appearance, and about two-thirds as large. The water is so very clear, that you may see the bottom as plainly as though filled with air. Here cooking might be carried on upon a large scale, without any consumption of fuel, as the water is at the boiling point.

Near sun-set, crossed the river, near the place where the emigrant route, called "Hasting's Cut-Off," forms a junction with our road. The "cut-off" runs around the south end of Salt Lake, starting from the Mormon City. Distance, eighteen miles.

## A THIEVING INDIAN—DANGEROUS GROUND.

September 18th.—Crossed the river four times, all within a short distance. The fords are good, and the stream low. We then traveled along the river bottom eight miles. The river then makes a great bend to the south, and passes through a tremendous canon, to avoid which we ascend a mountain eight miles, then descending a canon ten miles, we again arrived on the bank of the Humboldt, at midnight, and found a large train of emigrants encamped, and were very willing to do the same, being excessively weary with this day's march. In the latter part of the night, a man on guard shot at an Indian, who was in the act of stealing a horse. The sentinel did not know that his shot produced any other effect, except adding considerably to the speed of the villainous Digger.

At this encampment, I have conversed with a number of men who have just come through by way of Hastings' Cut-Off, or rather "Cut-On," as they term it, and they give it as their opinion, that it is a longer route than the northern one, by more than fifty miles. They had to cross a desert, ninety miles, without grass or water. It is a level, salt desert, and lies contiguous to the great Salt Lake. It seems to be a dangerous road to travel, especially towards the western limit. If caught upon this part of it in a shower of rain, the consequence would be disastrous, if not fatal; particularly as to the wagons and animals; all would sink, to rise no more. The road runs upon a crust, of no great thickness, covering an ocean of mud, saturated with salt. A small amount of rain dissolves this crust, and leaves the traveler in a most perilous situation. Many

teams have been lost in this dreary plain. In dry weather the desert can be crossed without danger of sinking. Let all travelers entirely avoid this route; there has been inexpressible suffering upon it the present season for want of water. Hundreds must have perished of thirst, had not some teams, after they had crossed, returned loaded with casks of water, for the relief of the famishing multitudes. Distance, thirty-three miles.

#### JERKING BEEF.

September 19th.—Moved along two miles, where we found a large company encamped, and concluded to lay by for the day, and slaughter an ox that a man belonging to our team had picked up, about ten miles this side of the last settlements, and either belonged to a Mormon, or else had strayed from an emigrant train. The ox made excellent beef; a part was sold at twelve cents per pound, and we jerked the remainder. These operations made a severe day's labor for all hands. We found a few teams along here that had started from Salt Lake with so small a supply of provisions, that they are now mostly destitute, although the journey is scarcely half accomplished. Their only resource will be to slaughter some of the cattle belonging to the trains, and subsist on meat alone. Distance, two miles.

#### THE HUMBOLDT—INDIAN BATTLE.

September 20th.—We move upon a very fine road, upon the south side of the river. This stream is now about sixty feet wide, and not more than eighteen inches deep upon the ripples. In the fore part of the

season, this river was a turbulent stream, and gave the emigrants great trouble in crossing, and in it not a few were drowned. The bottom land is seldom more than two miles wide, but the valley, consisting of rolling land, is of various widths, from five to twenty miles. The banks are everywhere fringed with willows, many of which being dead and dry, are excellent fuel. Where we stop, at noon, are twelve wagons: besides which, are two men packing upon ponies, and two others who carry on their backs their provisions and camp equipage. Men are so bent on going to the land of gold, that they travel on, whether properly prepared or not. I hear of two men now on the way to California, and who are ahead of us, one has a hand-cart, and the other a wheel-barrow.

To-day, the mountains are of moderate height to the right and left, and no snow is visible in any direction. I believe this to be the first time we have entirely lost sight of snow, since about the tenth of June. We encamp in a bend of the river, where the grass is like that of an eastern meadow, being a species of red-top, three feet high, very thick, and would produce three tons to the acre. Near our encampment, is a new grave, at the head of which a paper is posted, from which we learn that the man who lies buried here is from Keokuk, Iowa, and was killed in a battle with the Indians, on the fifth of August. Distance, eighteen miles.

#### TRAFFIC—A LIBRARY IN THE DESERT.

September 21st.—In the morning, passed an encampment of thirty or forty Diggers. One of the Swedes

traveling with our team, had a small horse, low in flesh, which he brought from Salt Lake. He swapped with one of these Indians for a fine pony, making a very good trade. Another man sold them an old, worn out jack-knife, destitute of a spring, for a silver dollar. These Diggers seem to be ignorant of the value of money, and by what means they became possessed of a dollar, is a mystery. The Indians in this quarter, go without clothes, not from necessity, but choice. They might clothe themselves without expense, if they desired to do so, as garments of every kind strew the ground on each side the way. The emigrants frequently throw away their clothing, upon finding newer and better garments. Since starting, I have in this way swapped articles of clothing several times.

Facilities for the acquisition of knowledge, are becoming ample along these barren deserts. Lying by the way-side, are a great variety of books, which their owners have thrown away to lighten their loads. From this extended library I frequently draw a volume, read and return it.

All the Indians along the Humboldt, call themselves Shoshonees, but the whites call them Diggers, from the fact that they burrow under ground in the winter.

#### INDIAN DEPREDATIONS.

We every day hear of emigrants having their animals stolen by Indians. These crafty marauders will creep up, and shoot cattle that are so closely guarded that they cannot drive them away. The animals thus slaughtered are left behind, and the Diggers feast upon their carcasses when the emigrants have gone. An ad-



joining train, a few mornings since, drove up their team, and found an arrow sticking in an ox to the depth of ten inches. A day or two since, a man falling back a short distance behind his train, had a bullet shot through his hat, grazing the top of his head. The ball came from a thicket of willows. Companies ought to keep near together, and guard with vigilance their camp and stock at night.

Crossed the river, and encamped near the bank; fifteen teams in sight. Ridgeway's passenger train, from St. Louis, came up with us here. This train, being a horse train, came by way of Hastings's Cut-Off, and started from the Mormon city one day in advance of us. Distance, twenty miles.

September 22d.—Sunday.—We passed this day in crossing a wide desert, destitute of all vegetation except the same monotonous sage. The river here makes a great bend to the north. At four, afternoon, came again to the river, and encamped. Here, and for a hundred miles back, the mountains look perfectly naked, not even a bush to be seen.

Distance, sixteen miles.

#### A CORPSE FOUND AND BURIED.

September 23d.—Continued our course along the same dreary desert, the river being several miles to the right. About ten in the morning, I discovered the corpse of a man lying about six rods from the road. He had been shot through the heart with a bullet, was stripped naked, and had been some eaten by wolves. His scalp had been taken off. It appears, that after he

was shot and scalped, he was dragged about two rods, in order to remove him from the blood, preparatory to stripping off his clothes. He lay on his back, among the sage bushes, upon a hard, smooth piece of saleratus ground, and in his death struggles had with his heels gouged two holes in the ground, nearly twelve inches in depth, and with his fingers had scratched up the earth as far each way as he could reach. We judged that he had been dead about twenty-four hours.—Twenty rods from the body, we found a piece of a pocket-book, containing a paper, from which we learned that his name was Huttenbaugh, from St. Louis. We buried the corpse, and I wrote a statement on a slip of paper, put it in a split stick, and placed it at the head of the grave.

These Indians will sometimes kill a man for the merest trifle of plunder, for a shirt, or even a fish-hook. They seem not to be aware of any difference, in a moral point of view, in the act of killing an antelope, or a human being. Stealing, also, is considered as meritorious, if they can do it and escape punishment. The Swede had his pony stolen during the past night. We suppose it has been taken by its former owner.

Encamped where the river enters a canon. Distance, sixteen miles.

#### HOT SPRINGS—AN EMIGRANT KILLED.

September 24th.—Started before sun-rise, and at ten o'clock passed a large number of hot springs, that seem to rise at the base of a hill, two miles south of the road. We did not visit them, but they send up a heavy column of steam visible many miles. We went over a high

bench of rocky land, and then came down upon the river, and halted. While here, a white man came over to us from the opposite bank, and informed us that the body of an emigrant had been found the day before, on the north side of the Humboldt, supposed to have been killed by Indians. Lying near it was also the corpse of an Indian. The emigrant had been shot through the heart with a ball; an arrow was still sticking in his skull. His bowels had been torn out, and the heart carried away. We begin to think that these Diggers are somewhat dangerous neighbors. Many of them have rifles, and all others have bows and arrows. Along here, the river runs a very serpentine course, through a valley twenty or thirty miles wide. The road proceeds in nearly a straight line, touching upon the stream only at the bends. The Humboldt seems to grow smaller as we follow it downwards. It has few or no tributaries, and the water is continually sinking, as well as being lost by evaporation. Distance, twenty miles.

#### THREE MEN KILLED.

September 25th.—In the afternoon, three men on foot overtook us, and were in a starving condition. Early on the morning of the twenty-fourth of September, twenty or thirty Indians on horseback, armed with rifles, attacked their company, consisting of six persons, killing three of the men; the other three, almost by a miracle, made their escape, and overtook us, after traveling seventy miles without food, having lost all their horses, clothing and provisions. The men killed, were Holman, from Kentucky, and two young men by

the name of Robinson, from Michigan. These men had fought with desperate bravery, first discharging their rifles, and then defending themselves with the breech of their guns, until borne down by numbers. It was a struggle for life. Distance, eighteen miles.

## CHAPTER VI.

Beautiful Bluffs of Marl.—Alkaline Desert.—Dangerous Cut-Off.—Singularity of the Humboldt.—The Big Meadow—Mormon Train.—Preparing to cross the Desert.—Human Bones and Graves.—Desert—Destruction of Property.—Sinks of Rivers.—Unexpected Supplies—Ragtown.—Effects of Habit.—A Splendid Camping-place—Huge Tree.—An Incident—Hard Gale.—Snow-fall on the Mountains.—Gold Miners.—Carson Valley—Mormon Train.—Thrilling Incident.—Hot Spring—Burning Mountain.—Carson Valley.—Commencement of the Ascent—Scenery.—Mountain Valley—Red Lake—Huge Trees.—Difficult Road—Nevada Lake.—Ascent of the Chief Range.—Sublime Prospect.—Sight of the Promised Land.—Monumental Inscriptions.—Descent of the Mountains.—Evening Party—Vocal Music.—Splendid Timber.—Follow a dividing Ridge.—Man and Wife shot by Indians.—Trading Posts—Speculators—Thieves.—Arrive at Settlements.—A Volunteer Company.—Sacramento Bottom.—Arrival at the City—Poetry.—Account of the Author.

### BEAUTIFUL BLUFFS OF MARL.

September 26th.—Proceeded down the broad valley ; the mountains to the right and left look very distant. The river becomes narrow and dirty, and has an alkaline taste. Alkali abounds throughout the whole valley of the Humboldt, and the waters are, of course, tinged with it. Encamped near the river, the bluffs being not more than fifty rods asunder, and they consist of a similar white marl to that which abounds in the



region of the Black Hills, east of the Rocky Mountains. This marl is mixed with gravel, and the bluffs have been water-worn into regular and beautiful forms. A few scattering cedars are visible to-day, on the sides of the distant mountains. Wagons are now our principal fuel; these are not scarce. Distance, eighteen miles.

#### ALKALINE DESERT.

September 27th.—Rose from the bottom, and soon came upon a sandy plain, upon which we traveled until about two o'clock, afternoon, when, descending a little, our road for several miles lay across an alkaline desert, hard and smooth, and destitute of every species of vegetation. It looked some like an immense brick-yard, prepared for use, and is doubtless covered with water in the rainy season.

Encamped where we found no grass. Willow browse is here the only subsistence for teams.

Distance, twenty miles.

#### A DANGEROUS CUT-OFF.

September 28th.—Started at half-past six. The view around presents low mountains at a distance, whilst near at hand are numerous ranges of pyramidical hills, composed of white marl, giving the landscape a magnificent appearance. To-day the road makes a great curve. Myself and others, on foot, took a straight course across another alkaline desert, three or four miles in breadth. On this tract a strong effluvia rises from the ground, having a pungent smell, like holding one's head over a chaldron of boiling salts of lye. The heat also was suffocating, so much so, that at one time we

thought it would be impossible to proceed further in this direction, but we persevered, and safe from harm issued at length from these suffocating exhalations.

#### SINGULARITY OF THE HUMBOLDT.

The Humboldt is a singular stream; I think the longest river in the world, of so diminutive a size. Its length is three or four hundred miles, and general width about fifty feet. From here, back to where we first saw it, the quantity of water seems about the same. It rather diminishes in size as it proceeds.

We met several Indians on horseback. They had bunches of angle-worms, tied up in handkerchiefs, and one of them, who could speak a little English, said they were going up the river to catch fish.

Encamped in a miserable, barren place, subsisting the cattle upon willow browse. On the top of a conical hill, eighty rods distant, sat a wolf very deliberately watching our movements. Distance, fifteen miles.

September 29th.—Move on through incessant clouds of dust. The mountains that bound the valley on each side, consist of naked rocks of a dark color. The soil in the valley is clay, and thoroughly dried by the sun. We encamp on the bank of the river, and appearances indicate that we are near the sink, the stream being sub-divided into a number of channels.

Distance, fifteen miles.

#### THE BIG MEADOW—MORMON TRAIN.

September 30th.—Arrived at noon on the confines of the "Big Meadow." Here the river spreads into a very shallow lake, twenty miles in length, by near ten miles

in breadth. This sheet of water is nearly surrounded by a wide morass, covered with a kind of coarse grass and rushes. This is the fodder which the emigrants take on board their wagons, preparatory to crossing the "Great Desert." This Big Meadow lies on both sides of the lake, and stretches along for a distance of fifteen or twenty miles. We encamped by the side of the Meadow, in company of fourteen Mormons, with eighty pack-horses and mules, on their return from California to Salt Lake. The account they give of the mines, is, by no means flattering. In conversation with one of these Mormons, the leader, he expressed an opinion that the United States have not power to subdue the Mormons. He said the Mormons could destroy an army of one hundred thousand men, before they arrived within fifty miles of the valley. I told him that five thousand men would be amply sufficient to annihilate all the followers of Joe Smith on the west side of the mountains, or to drive them into the Pacific Ocean. Distance, twelve miles.

#### PREPARING TO CROSS THE DESERT.

October 1st.—Lay by during the fore part of the day, for the purpose of cutting grass in the Big Meadow. Several small trains are here engaged in the same business. We tie the grass in bundles, and stow it in the wagons. Several packers are also making preparations by slinging two small bundles upon each horse or mule. We found a man here in difficult circumstances. He had two very poor horses, upon which to pack his clothing and provisions, and his two youngest children. He had a little boy, who, as well as himself, trudged along

on foot. He had buried his wife on the road. How he got through the journey, I never knew. He needed help, and there were those present abundantly able to assist, had they possessed dispositions to do so. I was only a passenger, and could not dictate. The men with whom I hired a passage, might have assisted this man, their cattle being in good order, and scarcely any load. But on this occasion, they manifested but little sympathy with suffering humanity. A Mr. Coil, from Missouri, did finally afford some aid. He took the two youngest children on board his wagon for a time, although his load was comparatively heavy.

#### HUMAN BONES AND GRAVES.

Along here, we observed human skulls and bones scattered around the plain, the remains, no doubt, of former emigrants, many of whom have, from appearances, here ended their wearisome journey, and closed their mortal career. We here saw several new graves. The corpses were partly disinterred by wolves, that, in this gloomy region, riot upon the flesh of human beings. These bodies had been buried in the most slight manner. Distance, seven miles.

#### DESERT—DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY.

October 2d.—Moved along the eastern shore of the Lake, and about noon, arrived at its southern terminus, where we saw the outlet, a small river twenty feet wide. This stream runs south upon the Desert six miles, where it expands into numerous small ponds, and here finally sinks in the sand. This spot is therefore the place where the waters of the Humboldt entirely disappear. We

found a considerable number at the south end of the Lake, cooking up food, filling water casks from the Lake, and making other preparations for crossing the dreaded Desert, whose arid sands are now in plain prospect before us.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, we moved forward and soon entered the skirts of the wide and desolate plain.

We soon perceived that the Desert is not as we had supposed, a perfect level, but is covered with little hillocks of sand, upon which is a very stunted growth of greasewood bushes. We also passed within sight of some considerable hills, and even mountains, standing on the Desert. The night was just cool enough for comfort, the air perfectly clear and calm, and the heavens sparkled with peculiar brilliancy, as we traversed the lonely plain, and pursued our nocturnal journey. At one o'clock at night, we stopped to rest, feed, and water the team. Then moved on again, and at sunrise, found ourselves within ten or twelve miles of the southern limit of the Desert, and in sight of a strip of light green cottonwood trees, growing upon the banks of Carson river, their verdant foilage contrasting finely with the white sands of the intervening plain. We here stopped and cooked a breakfast, in which process, we used several wagons, and quite a number of pack saddle-trees. To cook our meal, property was consumed that might have cost three hundred dollars in the States, but was of no value here. The destruction of property upon this part of the road, is beyond all computation. Abandoned wagons literally crowded the way for twenty miles, and dead animals are so numer-



ous, that I have counted fifty carcasses within a distance of forty rods.

The Desert from side to side, is strewn with goods of every name. The following articles however, are peculiarly abundant; log-chains, wagons, and wagon irons, iron bound water-casks, cooking implements, all kinds of dishes and hollow ware, cooking stoves and utensils, boots and shoes, and clothing of all kinds, even life preservers, trunks and boxes, tin-bakers, books, guns, pistols, gun-locks and barrels. Edged tools, planes, augers and chisels, mill and cross-cut saws, good geese feathers in heaps, or blowing over the Desert, feather beds, canvas tents, and wagon covers.

#### SINKS OF RIVERS.

We got across this Desert, which is so great a terror to emigrants, without suffering, and about three o'clock in the afternoon, arrived on the bank of Carson river at a point about twenty miles above the final sink of this stream, in the same great Desert that swallows up the Truckee, Walker, and Humboldt rivers, and how many others, is unbeknown to me.

#### UNEXPECTED SUPPLIES—RAGTOWN.

October 3d.—The Desert extends a great distance in length, and is of various widths. We crossed it at its narrowest part, being here only forty miles wide. We are now to follow the course of Carson river upwards to its source in the Sierra Nevada mountains. The stream at this place is fifty feet wide, the depth, two or three feet. The water is pure, and altogether the best we have seen for many hundreds of miles. A cup of

good water, is a treat to one who has drank nothing but tinctures of alkali, or salt for months.

This point, on the river, bears the classic name of "Ragtown." The reason of the appellation, is because there are several acres here, literally covered with rags, or clothing, either sound or tattered. The wood-work of thousands of wagons have been burnt at this place; the irons covered the soil for a considerable space around.

At Ragtown, to our great surprise, we found an abundant supply of flour from California. The flour was sent here by the Benevolent Society of Sacramento city. The agent, who has a large cloth tent, sells the flour for twenty-five cents per pound to those who have money, and gives twenty pounds to each one who is destitute of cash. I can assure you he was doing a heavy business, and throngs of moneyless customers constantly crowded his store. This charitable interposition, on the part of the good people of Sacramento, has prevented an immense amount of suffering. Most of the emigrants were out of flour, or nearly so, on their arrival here. Distance, forty miles.

October 4th.—If there was ever any grass here, it has been all killed by feeding and drouth, and our cattle still subsist on willow browse. I saw ice in iron dishes this morning. We find about one hundred emigrants around, who, like ourselves, have just crossed the Desert. Towards night we moved on, upon the right bank of the river and encamped. Distance, five miles.

## EFFECTS OF HABIT.

October 5th.—“A man may get used to any thing,” is an old saying, the truth of which is pretty clearly demonstrated on this journey. Traveling in constant clouds of dust, dirty faces, hands, and clothes, become less and less offensive, so that as we draw towards the termination of the journey, we see for a general rule, a dirty rabble. Men have stomachs that are far from being squeamish. I have seen a man eating his lunch, and gravely sitting upon the carcass of a dead horse, and we frequently take our meals amidst the effluvia of an hundred putrescent carcasses. Water is drank with a good relish, into which we know that scores of dead animals have been thrown, or have fallen. I saw three men eating a snake the other day, that one of them had dressed and cooked, not because they were in want of food, but as a rarity, or perhaps, rather by way of bravo, to show others that nothing would turn their stomachs. Graves of emigrants are numerous on this side the Desert. The usual mode of burying the dead on this route, is to dig a very shallow grave, inter the corpse without coffin, and set up a narrow piece of board by way of monument, on which a brief inscription is cut with a knife. Many, however, have only a split stick set up, into which a paper is put, on which the inscription is written.

Leaving the river, we went over a hill of considerable elevation. No green thing visible until arriving again at the river, where we pitched our tent in quite a delightful place. Large cotton wood trees were dispersed around the landscape, which was covered with green, but very short grass. We here came in sight of

some of the peaks of the dreaded Sierra Nevada, covered with snow. Distance, fifteen miles.

A SPLENDID CAMPING-PLACE—HUGE TREE.

October 6th.—Sunday.—Started at three o'clock in the morning, and passed through a sand desert ten miles broad, when coming again to the river we found a trading-post, kept by two Yankees from "down east." Their stock was nearly expended, having nothing to sell, at this time, except a little flour and sugar. The price of sugar was seventy-five cents per pound.

Crossing a branch of the river, over to an island, we pitched our tents in the midst of a lawn of several hundreds of acres covered with splendid grass, sufficiently large for mowing. Here were several small trains, consisting of nearly an hundred persons, and we all encamped under the widespreading boughs of an immense cottonwood tree, which was of such extraordinary proportions as to merit a brief description.

The trunk was ten feet in diameter. At twelve feet from the ground, it divides into several huge branches, which rise to the height of fifty feet, sending out a great number of limbs, in a horizontal direction, to the distance of sixty feet, forming a dense shade. The weather being hot, the shadow of this tree was truly inviting. This encampment is a location of rare beauty. The island is perfectly level, and of an oval form. A strip of stately green trees upon the water-courses, entirely surround the place. At a short distance are chains of low hills, while far to the west are seen the frosty summits of the Sierra peeping over numerous subordinate mountains of ethereal blue.

Distance, eleven miles.

October 7th.—In the afternoon, moved along the right bank, and encamped on the bottom. Distance, seven miles.

AN INCIDENT—HARD GALE.

October 8th.—A warm morning, and very pleasant, but a black cloud hangs upon the peaks of the distant mountains, denoting the approach of a storm. Such an appearance is not very pleasing to us, as we know that at this late season of the year, whenever it rains in the valley, there is a fall of snow on the Sierra Nevada, and it often falls there in such prodigious quantities as to overwhelm both man and beast. Whole trains have been lost in these deluges of snow. We crossed the river, and followed up eight miles through a narrow defile, having almost perpendicular mountains upon each side of us. About nine o'clock in the morning, going on by myself, half a mile in advance of the train, thinking of home, and contrasting in my mind these interminable deserts and mountains of naked rocks, with the verdant landscapes of the Mississippi valley, a small piece of paper, driving along before the wind, stopped at my feet. I picked it up, and found written upon it the following lines of poetry, which, I think, were composed by Miss Harriet Beecher :

“ Yes, my native land, I love thee,  
All thy scenes, I love them well,  
Friends, connexions, happy country,  
Can I bid you all farewell ?”

This may appear a very trifling incident, but in the then state of my mind, and the surrounding circumstances, it produced a thrilling effect upon my easily excited feelings.



About the middle of the day we had a violent gale of wind, which darkened the air with clouds of dust. It reminded me of what travelers relate concerning the terrible simoon winds on the great African Desert.

Distance, fifteen miles.

#### SNOW—FALL ON THE MOUNTAINS.

October 9th.—Went over a rocky bench of the mountain, and then came down upon the river. A considerable quantity of new snow is seen this morning, which has fallen during the past night. The surrounding mountains look perfectly white from their summits downwards to within a thousand feet of the level of the plain. Before we arrive at the land of gold, we must mount into a region at least four thousand feet higher than the level of the road upon which we are now traveling, and of course three thousand feet above the line of the new fallen snow.

Passing through the Little Desert, so called, we soon entered the lower end of Carson Valley. The steep mountains on our right, are thickly covered with pines of a large size. This is the first appearance of anything like a forest that we have seen since leaving the States. On the east side of the valley, the mountains present no green thing; all is naked and dreary.

#### GOLD MINERS.

To-day we have seen several California miners prospecting for gold in the canons around this valley. We learn that they have discovered a little of the "dust," about three miles to the west of the road. Two men from our train, went out to the place, and returned,

bringing with them two or three small specks of gold, sufficiently large to be barely visible. Thus we find ourselves already in the gold region, when we had supposed ourselves distant from it more than a hundred miles. But a trifling amount of gold has as yet been found in this quarter, though it is possible that rich deposits may hereafter be discovered on the east side of the Sierra Nevada.

In the afternoon, upon turning around the point of a mountain on our left, we passed a splendid spring of fresh water, a trifle warmer than blood heat. The basin is one hundred feet in length, sixteen in breadth, and the depth of water six feet. The water is very transparent. What a location for a bathing-house! Who knows, but that such an establishment, upon a grand scale, may be erected here, when the great Pacific Railway shall roll the tides of commerce and crowds of travel along this now lonely valley?

Distance, twenty-one miles.

#### CARSON VALLEY—MORMON TRAIN.

October 10th.—Moved along up the valley. It is an oasis of great extent, green, romantic and beautiful, situated in the midst of vast deserts and barren mountains. The Carson river runs a serpentine course through the valley, the banks being everywhere fringed with a luxuriant growth of willows. The valley lies north and south, is of an oval form, and is covered with a natural growth of excellent grass. On the west side, the mountain rises to a great height, and from its base spring a great number of small creeks of pure and exceedingly cold water. These rills, running swiftly over

pebbled beds, cross the road at short intervals, and meandering through the grassy plain, fall at length into the Carson river.

At ten in the morning, we met a train of sixty Mormons, with four hundred horses and mules, on their way to Salt Lake. These Mormons informed us, that two days previously they had killed and scalped six Digger Indians, in revenge for thirty mules which the Indians had stolen from them. They took from the Diggers five horses, though they were not the same as those they lost, and did not know whether the Indians they had killed were those concerned in the theft, or otherwise. This was executing justice upon the same principle as practiced by the Indians. When an Indian is killed by a white man, the tribe to which he belonged never feel satisfied until the life of some white man atones for the offence. In this case, any other individual answers their purpose precisely as well as the identical murderer.

At noon, we stopped at a trading-post, called the Mormon Station. It is a large log building, standing in the skirts of the pine grove which covers the mountain side, and at this point extends quite down to the level of the valley. These are the nut-bearing pines, full of pitch, tall, and covered with limbs to within eight or ten feet of the ground. Some of these trees were six feet in diameter.

We encamped where wood, water and grass were abundant, and here found several companies of emigrants.

## THRILLING INCIDENT.

This morning, a young man belonging to our train, was sent back ten miles, for the purpose of bringing up an ox, that had tired and had been left on the six mile desert. When he arrived within half a mile of the spot where the animal had been left, he perceived a crowd of Indians, apparently feasting on the carcass of the ox. The Diggers saw the young man coming, when twenty or thirty of them, mounting their ponies, gave him chase for about six miles. The young man threw away his boots, and in his stocking-feet ran for life, striking his course for the river, not daring to keep the smooth road. He crossed and re-crossed the river many times, for the purpose of gaining time on his ferocious pursuers, who being all mounted, found it difficult in some places to find a ford. At length, watching a favorable opportunity, and keeping for a short time under cover of the willows, until the Indians were nearly half a mile in the rear, and on the opposite side of the river, he struck across the grassy plain towards the road, and in the direction of our camp, distant at this time about four miles. The Indians soon discovering the object of their pursuit, with hideous yells came on with accelerated speed, rapidly gaining ground while ready to launch their winged arrows, and the pursued was about to sink exhausted on the ground and thus surrender his life, when, to his great joy, the lengthy Mormon train came in sight around the point of a hill but a few rods ahead. The Indians stopped short in the chase, and fled with precipitation. This circumstance was, without doubt, the means by which the fellow escaped with his scalp. Distance, ten miles.

## HOT SPRING—BURNING MOUNTAIN.

October 11th.—Moving forward, we passed a remarkable hot spring. It gushes from the base of a mountain, between strata of horizontal rocks, in nearly a continuous thin sheet; the water being near the boiling point, and the stream nearly a mile in breadth. This is by far the widest river of hot water that we have as yet seen. Indeed, we have not heard or read of anything like it. The quantity of water, however, is not so great as might be inferred from its extraordinary width, the stream being very shallow, seldom more than an inch in depth, but it flows down upon an extensive flat, where it forms a large marsh, or pond, in which there is a dense growth of the most gigantic bulrushes. The road runs just above the line from where the water flows, the mountain above it being entirely destitute of trees and vegetation of every kind, though other mountains around are covered with timber. This mountain looks as though scorched and dried by internal fires, and is said occasionally to present luminous appearances in the night, thus threatening a volcanic eruption. At the same time, we can see great clouds of steam arising from hot springs on the eastern side of the valley, and distant from us fifteen or twenty miles.

## CARSON VALLEY.

After traveling four miles, arrived at Erwin's trading post, and concluded to tarry here through the remainder of the day, and cut grass, preparatory to commencing the ascent of that stupendous chain of mountains, whose frowning summits, towering high in



the heavens, seem to forbid our further progress. The ascent commences with the "Big Canon," so called, said to be a terrific piece of road, from which we are now distant eight miles. We hear a report that Indians are collecting in force about the canon, to take vengeance on the emigrants for the massacre perpetrated by the Mormon train. We afterwards found this story to be without foundation; but we can see in the night the fires of numerous Indian encampments at a great distance, and on the opposite side of the valley. This valley, though high above the level of the sea, is nevertheless valuable for agricultural purposes. I have no doubt but that crops of most kinds, except indian corn, could be raised in abundance. There is land sufficient to form a County, and streams suitable for mills, or irrigation, and above all places, this is a location where produce would sell for high prices, if emigration across the plains should continue.

Distance, four miles.

#### COMMENCEMENT OF THE ASCENT—SCENERY.

October 12th.—A fine morning, and our encampment is in a delightful spot, on ground somewhat elevated above the circumjacent valley. A few rods to the west of us, is the steep mountain side, covered with enormous pines, while to the east, the smooth green valley stretches far away to the foot of a chain of dry and naked mountains. In or near the center of the valley, opposite to us, the two main branches of the Carson river unite, and having their banks fringed with a dense growth of willows, the eye can trace the windings of the streams through the entire length of the

valley. During the past night we were entertained with a grand musical concert by wolves. Innumerable voices seemed to have joined in the chorus.

Being prepared with grass, we now moved on, two wagons only in company. In a few hours we arrived at the entrance of the big canon, and commenced the ascent which we found to be a narrow defile, so steep that we may be said to climb, rather than travel, for six miles. Down this narrow passage rushes the main branch of the Carson river, roaring loudly, and tumbling over a succession of cataracts, or foaming amidst huge granitic boulders, which in most places fill the channel of the stream.

The scenery of this canon, exceeds all I have yet seen for wild magnificence. There is only room for the road and the river running close by its side, while on either hand the mountains rise to a fearful height, their sides, in some places, presenting perpendicular cliffs, and in others, trees of pine or balsam, clinging as with a death-grasp, to crevices in the rocks. A multitude of the putrescent carcasses of animals line the road-side, or have been thrown into the rushing stream. The poor creatures here ended their wearisome journey, being unable, through weakness, to ascend this formidable height, and were by their owners abandoned to starvation and death. Six miles of climbing, in which nameless obstacles had to be surmounted, brought us at length to a kind of summit level, near the head of the canon, which here expands to a considerable width, the ground being somewhat level, with clumps of stunted shrubbery dispersed around. We here pitched our tent, a little after dark. We have now taken the first

degree in crossing these celebrated mountains, and the terrific grandeur of the scenery thus far, can only be conceived, for it cannot be described. Here a little new snow lay on the ground, and the wind was cold and piercing. Distance, fourteen miles.

MOUNTAIN VALLEY—RED LAKE—HUGE TREES.

October 13th.—Sunday.—Moved forward at an early hour; the road level for two miles, when we suddenly and unexpectedly emerged from the canon into a mountain valley. It lies north and south, is ten miles long, and two in breadth. The road here turns to the left, or south, and passes through the valley lengthwise. The ground has a lively green hue, being covered with short grass, whilst around the landscape are dispersed clumps of pine and aspen trees, interspersed with many large heaps of loose granitic rocks. Through this lonely vale, the Carson river winds its way, but is here diminished to the size of a small brook, with gentle current, rolling over beds of pebbles. I think this valley must be six or seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, as snow lies through the year at a little higher elevation. Innumerable summits of rough, jagged, and snow-capped mountains, surround the valley on all sides. We emerged from it at the southern terminus, and passed over a chain of high hills, covered with the most stupendous trees, consisting of pine, cedar and balsam fir. We soon descend into another valley, where there is a sheet of water called Red Lake. It is narrow, and between one and two miles in length. It lies east and west. The western terminus stretches to the foot of the dividing ridge of the Sierra Nevada,

from which the waters diverge to the east and west.—This dividing ridge is the most difficult to surmount of the two principal chains of these mountains, though the western ridge is somewhat higher. These main ridges run parallel to each other, and frequently in close approximation. There is tall grass around the border of the lake. I here took the measurement of a pine tree. It was seven feet in diameter, the trunk was round and tall, and fifty feet or thereabouts without branches.

#### DIFFICULT ROAD—NEVADA LAKE.

After refreshing ourselves and team at the lake, we clambered up an ascent about two miles, which is the most dreaded by emigrants of any upon the entire land route to California. The road is crooked, taking numerous short turns around the roots of huge trees, and in some places, is paved over with large roundish rocks. Up, and over these, the cattle are compelled to climb, sometimes slipping down, and in other instances, creeping upwards upon their knees. Fortunately, we had no load at this time, and we found an empty wagon quite sufficient for three yoke of oxen to draw. In some parts of this ascent, we keep upon the summit of a narrow ridge, on either side of which is a deep canon, into which, by a little mismanagement, the team and carriage might easily be hurled to instant destruction.

After gaining this giddy height, we found a little level ground, and then descended into another valley lying between the two main chains of these mountains. Here is a lake of considerable extent, irregular in form, and sprinkled with numerous little islands, green and overgrown with moss. I know of no name for this

sheet of water. I will therefore venture to christen it Nevada Lake. We encamped in the skirts of an ancient forest at the south end of the lake, and under the shelter of immense rocks of granite. The cold was benumbing, but fuel being plenty, we rolled together a pile of dry pine logs and setting it on fire, the flame soon illuminated a portion of the deep, dark, and gloomy vale. Over head, the heavens were without a cloud, and the stars gleamed with the brilliancy of a Winter's night. Around us on all sides, dark mountains towered high, and being covered with the sable pall of night, presented a striking picture of gloomy magnificence. No place could be better fitted for contemplation on the sublime and wonderful works of Nature. We are naturally led to inquire what periods of duration have elapsed since these stupendous towers were upheaved in solemn pomp from the abysses of the deep? What crashing of a thousand thunders resounded over an uninhabited world, when by the mighty force of internal fires, the globe's solid crust was broken up? How long will these massive piles withstand the war of elements, before they shall be decomposed and sunk to level plains? While this lengthy process moves slowly but surely onward, what revolutions among nations will take place, and what moral and intellectual changes in reference to the human race? We may raise a thousand such queries, but no voice returns an answer. All is silent as the mute rocks or still waters now sleeping in this valley.

The two principal ranges of these mountains at this point, approximate each other, and are but two or three miles asunder. Distance, fifteen miles.



## ASCENT OF THE CHIEF RANGE.

October 14th.—Took an early breakfast, and moved forward, leaving the lake at its south-western extremity, and soon commenced the ascent of the western ridge, the loftiest chain in all these ranges of mountains. We regarded it as the last and most formidable barrier we have to surmount, in arriving at the half fabulous region of untold wealth. We thought, that if we could once get to the height of this last summit, we should then be comparatively safe from those dreaded storms of snow, which in these elevated regions sometimes descend sudden as an avalanche, overwhelming whole caravans and dooming them to certain destruction. Once at the frozen summit, and within sight of the sunny plains beyond it, we might by some means make our way down the declivity, even should we find it buried in depths of snow. The last ascent is six miles; the first three, through dense forests of ever-green timber, the remaining three miles, the mountain is mostly bare, except here and there a scattering tree. The last two miles of the ascent is terrific, being excessively steep, and a part of the way so sideling, that it was necessary for several men to brace themselves against a wagon to prevent its upsetting and rolling down the side of the mountain. By doubling teams, and assisting with manual strength, we succeeded in gaining the top of this dreaded eminence by two o'clock in the afternoon. The sun shone clear and bright, but the wind raged with violence, and the cold was so intense that we all went to the wagons and put on our great coats and woolen mittens. We were now in, or above the region of the clouds, some of which were sailing swiftly past

on a level with ourselves, and others far below us. We were happily disappointed in finding but little snow in the road, though at a short distance on either hand, we perceive it in dense masses, and it appears to have lain here during the lapse of ages. Near the top of the ridge, there is an immense embankment of snow stretching along in a horizontal line, which it would seem was originally blown from, or over the summit of the mountain. In other places this ancient snow fills the hollows up to the common surface of the ground, and runs in irregular lines down the sides of the declivity. This old snow is nearly as hard as ice, and presents a faint resemblance to the glaciers upon the Alps in Switzerland. Near the summit of the ridge there is what appears to be the crater of an extinguished volcano. It is an immense hole, perpendicular on the sides, like a well, about four hundred yards in diameter, and we judged more than a thousand feet in depth. There is a pond of water at the bottom, and an outlet on the lower side. Arriving near the top of the ridge, the road turns to the south, and runs along the summit about two miles, but our view towards the west is obstructed as yet by a ridge of granite and trappean rock, that rises like a wall on our right to the height of nearly two hundred feet. The appearance of this wall, is as though the granite had been broken through by some tremendous force from below, while the dark masses of rock were protruded upward through the opening where it now appears as a crown-work to the wall.

#### SUBLIME PROSPECT.

Looking back to the east, the prospect is one of gloomy grandeur. A valley of immense depth em-

embosoming a lake, and otherwise covered with dense forests of dark evergreens, lies under our feet, while beyond it, many frosty peaks are seen mingling with the clouds and pinnacles of naked rocks projecting from a basement of snow. We now come to a break in the wall like a gate-way; through this we pass, and in an instant the New World of California bursts at once upon our impatient sight. We were now nine thousand and three hundred feet above the level of the sea, and nearly two thousand feet higher than the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains. Upon this stupendous observatory, I halted a short time to take a general view of the boundless panorama spread out before me. The view is so vast and of such surpassing grandeur, that the mind is bewildered and lost amidst the boundless expanse, like attempting to grasp eternity or infinite space by the aid of our feeble powers. I was utterly unable at first, to arrange the outlines of this immense future in anything like a systematic order. At length, fixing my steady gaze towards the west, the sight being assisted by a small telescope, a waving line of light blue at two hundred miles distance is seen to run along the verge of the western horizon. This is the coast range of mountains near the Pacific Ocean. This limits the view in that direction. The intermediate space consists of the great valley of the Sacramento and Joachin river embosoming the Bay of San Francisco which penetrates far into the plain, sending out numerous arms in all directions. North and south, the view is bounded only by the power of vision. I believe the extent of country visible from this point to be at least two hundred miles in breadth, by five hundred in

length. Immediately in front, we have a more distinct view of the great western slope of the Sierra Nevada. This slope consists of a great number of ridges or chains of mountains, running a westerly course in zigzag lines, starting from the main range on which we now stand, and gradually diminishing in height, until they terminate at the eastern limit of the broad plain of the Sacramento. Between every two of these long ridges flows some river or one of its branches, which, traversing the mountains and crossing the plain, falls at length into the Sacramento river. Such are the grand outlines of the landscape, which, however, is vastly too extensive to enable us to take a view of objects more minute.

The reader is not to understand that we cross the mountain at any of its highest points ; far from it. The surveyors sought the lowest pass that could be found. On either side of the pass, at no great distance, are summits several thousands of feet higher than the road on which we travel. These are destitute of vegetation, and apparently smoothed over with vast depths of everlasting snow of intense whiteness, being at an altitude to which dust never rises. The whole western declivity of the mountain below us, appears like one vast and unbroken forest.

#### SIGHT OF THE PROMISED LAND.

We now feel safe, being conscious that the dangers most feared are now past, and the chief obstacles to be met with in this weary pilgrimage are surmounted, and the realms of civilization are now within the circle of vision. Standing upon this towering eminence, the

way-worn traveler experiences sensations similar to those felt by Moses of old, when he climbed to the top of Mount Pisgah, and for the first time caught a distant glimpse of the Promised Land.

#### MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS.

I do not think it possible to drive teams over heights more difficult than those we have ascended, being twice the height of the Alleghanies, and as high as the White and Green Mountains piled upon each other, and I think higher than any of the passes of the Alps into Italy. Hannibal and Napoleon gained deathless renown by crossing the Alps, which might not have been a more hazardous undertaking than crossing the Sierra Nevada, yet I am suspicious that thousands have crossed these tremendous heights the present year, who will not acquire immortal honor by the exploit. One thing, however, is certain; that is, if the names of the California emigrants should not chance to be inscribed in the records of fame, you may yet see countless thousands of their names, very legibly written with chalk, wagon-grease, or paint, upon the everlasting rocks that compose the towering ranges of these mountains. Volumes might be filled with these elevated names. Here are monuments that will stand until the "rocks fall to dust," though the inscriptions upon them will soon fade away.

#### DESCENT OF THE MOUNTAINS.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, we commenced the western descent, which we found to be less abrupt, and not so rocky as the ascent on the eastern side. We descended, by a succession of sharp pitches, and in



some places find deep, loose sand, instead of naked rocks. Soon after leaving the summit, we observed another deep hole, with a pond also, at the bottom. It is, doubtless, the crater of a volcano now extinct, but the time has been, when from these deep caverns rivers of fire have been disgorged. This last is as deep as that on the eastern declivity, but its sides are not quite perpendicular. I think it is but a mile or two, in a straight horizontal line from the bottom of one of these craters to the other. It would be possible to tunnel the mountain at this place for a railroad, and thus save some thousands of feet elevation. Five miles of desert brought us down to a bench of the mountains, called Rock Valley, in which we encamped, the weather cold and wind violent, with squalls of snow. We here saw dark masses of clouds below us, and rolling up through the gorges of the mountains. Wood was abundant, and we built several roaring fires, and got through a stormy night without much suffering.

Distance, twelve miles.

#### EVENING PARTY—VOCAL MUSIC.

October 15th.—We perceive that the climate on the western side of the mountains is more mild. Have seen no old snow lying very near us since we descended from the summit. This difference is owing to the warm gales from the Pacific. The Sierra Nevada presents an effectual barrier against the chilling blasts from the east, south-east, and north-east. The cold storms from the north Atlantic never reach the Sacramento valley. The snow that fell during the past night is mostly gone this morning, although the weather is still damp and

chilly. We have concluded to tarry here through the day, having found some indifferent pasturage down in a deep valley two or three miles from the road. The teams need refreshment, after the two past days of fatigue and privation. Several small companies, besides our own, have also stopped here, and we all pitch our tents beneath the interwoven boughs of twelve majestic pines, standing remarkably close together. We rolled together several piles of dry pine and cedar logs, whose brilliant blaze illumined the dark forest for a considerable space around. The whole party, standing or seated around these crackling fires, enjoyed a social evening, with minds more free from care than has been their wont for months before. We were now in California; what more could we ask? Alas, how little did some of us realize at that time the troubles still in reserve for us, in this new world, upon the confines of which we were now standing. Among the persons composing the company, were several intelligent and apparently respectable men. There was a lawyer from St. Louis, and a physician from Tennessee. These gentlemen related some incidents of their journey, one of which I will repeat:

When coming down the Humboldt, they traveled in a train consisting wholly of ox-teams, conducted by one hundred men, all of whom were well armed. Notwithstanding their force was so respectable, they were much annoyed by a band of four hundred Indians, all of whom were mounted. The Indians were not willing to come to a close engagement with the men of the train, who marched out in a body at three different times to provoke them to stand and fight a battle. The

Indians would stand their ground until the white men approached within half a mile, exchanging long shots with rifles, producing but little effect, when they would all mount their ponies and gallop away to a station at a greater distance. Thus, for three days and nights, these Indians kept the train in a constant state of alarm, expecting every moment to hear the war-whoop sounded, and to find themselves attacked by these savage hordes on every side. The Indians were doubtless stimulated to make these hostile demonstrations, by a desire of possessing themselves of the rich booty of an hundred yoke of oxen, and other valuable property. But finding the whites so well prepared, they concluded to decamp, for although they are fond of plunder, yet to obtain it they do not choose to run much risk of losing their lives. They seem to fear death, as do other human beings.

In this evening's party were a number of good singers. We joined our voices in full concert, and sung several of the old tunes dear to memory, such as 'Old Hundred,' 'Windham,' 'Wells,' and 'Coronation,' and made the mountains echo with the strains of sacred song.

#### SPLENDID TIMBER.

October 16th.—Broke up our encampment, and moved along down the declivity, generally descending, but occasionally rising a considerable hill. We can perceive that the climate is becoming warmer at almost every step. A general view, taken from the tops of hills over which we pass, presents an irregular assemblage of hills and mountains around us, in endless variety as to form and elevation. In many of the deep

dells on each side of our course, we observe small lakes of fresh water.

The forest becomes more dense as we proceed. During the day, I took the measurement of pines eight feet in diameter, and mountain cedars of nearly the same size. I saw none that had fallen down, and therefore did not ascertain the height to which this timber grows, but judged that some trees were above two hundred feet high.

We encamp below Leak Springs, having descended from a considerable height during the day. The air is soft and balmy, and feels as though we are approaching the season of Summer. Distance, twenty-five miles.

#### FOLLOW A DIVIDING RIDGE.

October 17th.—Continue our course, descending the mountain. We occasionally catch a glimpse of the Sacramento valley. It appears broad and perfectly level, but is dim in the distance, and we can see no object distinctly. We find that we are traveling on the summit of a dividing ridge between two rivers, viz: the Cosumne and the South Fork of the American. Some small oaks were seen to day, interspersed among the evergreen timber. Encamped in the midst of a dense body of trees, the largest and tallest we have ever beheld. Distance, fifteen miles.

#### MAN AND WIFE SHOT BY THE INDIANS.

October 18th.—A very warm morning, and the forest is vocal with the wild melody of birds, like Spring-time in the northern States, but our elevation is still several thousand feet above the level of the valley.

In the vicinity of this encampment, we had an opportunity of taking the measurement of many trees, some of which were lying on the ground. There were pine trees, ten, and even twelve feet in diameter, and towering to the height of three hundred feet or more. These facts we should have been loth to believe without ocular proof. By the side of such a grove, the stateliest pine forests in the eastern States would appear like humble shrubbery. These gigantic trees frequently stand near together. I counted thirty trees, pine and cedar, on fifty square rods of ground, ranging in size from two to ten feet, diameter. I afterwards saw in a valley not far distant, a large tract of land more thickly timbered still. To-day we noticed rocks of slate and quartz, and not so great an amount of granite, though there are vast masses of conglomerate rocks, that seem to have had a volcanic origin. We stopped for the night at a trading post, where we found a young couple of Tennesseans, a man and his wife. They had been wounded the day before, with arrows shot by two Indians, two miles east of this place. When attacked, they were traveling on foot and by themselves, and driving before them their two oxen, upon which their goods and provisions were packed. They had left their wagon on the desert. Unfortunately, the man had no fire-arms at the time, but kept the Indians in check by hurling at his assailants pebbles picked up from the road. He says he dodged more than twenty arrows, till at length, one struck him in the shoulder blade, disabling his left arm. At this time he had retreated, facing the enemy, until he found himself and wife at the summit of a long and very steep descent. Here



they both turned and fled with winged speed down the hill, the enemy gave up the pursuit, and the fugitives arrived at this post, leaving their oxen behind. This attack of the Indians seems to have been made through mere wantonness or malignity, and not for plunder, as the oxen were soon afterwards discovered in the woods with all the baggage safe. The woman was severely wounded through the breasts, at the commencement of the attack. Her husband did not notice it, having at the time his attention drawn another way, and she, although but eighteen years of age, was so much of a heroine, that she made no complaint, and her partner knew not of the wound, until both had gained a place of safety. Neither would she leave her husband during the fight, although she was urged by him to do so, and by that means save her own life.

Distance, fifteen miles.

#### TRADING POSTS—SPECULATORS—THIEVES.

October 19th.—As we move along, we are more and more astonished at the size and height of the trees, and aggregate quantity of timber. A gentleman who was present, observed that were these forests situated on the east side of the Mississippi, they would be worth more money than all the gold mines of California. After five miles progress, concluded to stop and turn out the team to graze; we are now proceeding quite leisurely. We stop at a trading post. These establishments, called "trading posts," have been immensely numerous along the roads between the mines and the desert; but as the travel has now mostly ceased, the posts are in general broken up and abandoned. They are mere temporary

stores, set up by speculators from California, for the purpose of making extravagant gains, by trading with the emigrants just arrived from the Plains, and entirely ignorant of the price at which various kinds of property sells in this country. These unscrupulous traders would give twenty, and not unfrequently ten pounds of flour, for a horse, worth in California, one hundred dollars. In this way, these crafty traders have "made their piles" by taking advantage of the ignorance or the distress of the starving emigrants. Not a few of these traders were thieves as well as speculators, and by them, vast numbers of cattle and horses have been driven off a distance from the road, leaving their owners to think they had strayed, or had been stolen by the Indians. The Indians are thieves, but they do business upon a small scale when compared with the operations of these genteel, wholesale thieves and robbers. It seems to be a hard case for an emigrant, who having lost and suffered so much, and upon arriving near his destination, is robbed of the remainder of his worldly store by the hands of his own countrymen. Such, however, have happened in a thousand instances, and those who boast of civilization and christianity, have proved themselves a more treacherous and heartless race, than the untutored hordes that roam the desert.

Some of these reckless plunderers are professional men, and pass for gentlemen. I saw one of these high characters on my way down the mountain, who had with him a drove of an hundred head of cattle and horses, nearly all of which were stolen from the emigrants.

To-day, a gentleman showed me a variety of specimens of gold dust, in all, amounting in value to more

than a thousand dollars. There were lumps of pure gold, worth from five to thirty dollars each. This, to me, was a curiosity, being the first I had ever seen.

A mulatto man employed at this post, being out to-day guarding horses, was shot by an Indian and wounded, the ball passing through his arm, and lodging in a powder-flask which was slung by his side.

Distance, five miles.

October 20th.—We traveled only six miles this day, and saw nothing to admire, except the lofty forests of pine and cedar, covering all the surrounding landscape. We find ourselves in a climate somewhat too warm for comfort. Instead of the overcoats and mittens worn a few days ago, we have now divested ourselves of all our clothing except pantaloons and shirts.

Distance, six miles.

#### ARRIVE AT SETTLEMENTS.

October 21st.—Started in the morning and traveled till midnight, and arrived on the borders of civilization. It was a small mining town called Ringgold, on Weaver Creek, a branch of the South Fork of the American river. Weaverville lies adjoining, and both villages constitute a kind of irregular street, about one mile in length, running along the bottom of a deep ravine, and close to the brink of the stream. Hangtown, a much larger place, is only three miles distant. It received this euphonious and elegant name in consequence of the number of criminals that have here received their deserts by the summary process of Lynch law.

Distance, twenty-five miles.

## A VOLUNTEER COMPANY.

October 22d.—We learn that some of the miners in this place and the vicinity, are making fortunes, but a large majority are doing but little or nothing. We hear that such a state of affairs is by no means singular in California. The next evening after we arrived at Ringgold, there was a great excitement in the place in consequence of the murder of a white man by an Indian. The most exaggerated reports were spread concerning the force and warlike movements of the natives. A mass meeting was called in the evening, a company of volunteers raised on the spot, which started early the next morning with threatenings of death against any Indian that might chance to fall in their way. After wearying themselves by climbing over rocks, hills, and mountains, they returned late in the night, not having succeeded in seeing or hearing of a solitary Indian. As they entered the town, they raised a general war-whoop, and all discharged their rifles in a running fire. The villagers starting from sleep, concluded that the town was attacked by the savages, and began to rally for battle, when happily, they discovered that this nocturnal enemy was nothing but the returning volunteers. The farce ended in a laugh, prolonged by means of repeated potations of brandy.

We are now fairly in the mining country, and I observe that the prevailing rocks are takore, slate, and quartz. This last, is considered by the miners as the original source of all the gold deposits.

The whole region around here is full of little towns that have started into existence within a few months.

Some of these places contain thousands of men, and perhaps a dozen women. Cooking seems to be one of the most lucrative employments, and in this business an active woman can earn two hundred dollars per month. The principal part of the cooking, however, as well as washing, is performed by men. Fifty cents is here the price for washing a shirt. A new one costs but one dollar. Miners therefore find it the best economy to wear a shirt three or four weeks, then throw it away and buy a new one. The country is strewn with shirts, many of which are whole but stiffened with dirt. The houses in the towns are sometimes constructed with logs, but generally are a kind of frame, the posts set in the ground and covered with split boards or long shingles. The earth is commonly the only floor. Cloth tents are the principal abodes of miners, and with these airy habitations, the suburbs of all mining towns are crowded. Great numbers are destitute of tents, and sleep in the open air, or beneath the branches of the trees. In this mild climate, where no dew ever falls, sleeping in the open air is by no means detrimental to health.

In all the mountain tracts upon the western slope, the soap plant is one of the most common vegetables. It is a natural production, and is said to be an excellent substitute for soap, and is used by the Mexicans for that purpose. They make use of the root, which is of the bulbous kind, in shape much like an onion, weighing one or two pounds, and is cased on the outside with a thick covering resembling coarse brown hair. Distance, thirty miles.



## SACRAMENTO BOTTOM.

October 23d.—Having arrived within sixty miles of Sacramento city, and as the whole distance has now become a settled country, with towns and public houses at short intervals, I shall add but a few words to this chapter. We moved along down the declivity, passing through the towns of “Diamond Springs,” and “Mud Springs,” the hills constantly diminishing in height, the trees growing shorter and more scattering, and before the close of this day’s travel, evergreen timber entirely disappeared, and oak alone prevailed. Late in the evening, we came down the last hill, and found ourselves on the level border of the Sacramento bottom, amidst weeds and grass, dry as tinder, and scattering oaks, having short but large trunks with wide branching tops and luxuriant foliage. Here we encamped and turned out the teams to graze for a few days. The grass, although perfectly dry, is nevertheless nutritious, as neither rain or dew has ever fallen upon it since it has been in its present state.

Distance, twenty-five miles.

## ARRIVAL AT THE CITY—POETRY.

October 27th, 1850.—Having rested, washed up clothing, &c., I left my baggage to be brought on by the teams, and wended my way on foot and alone towards the city, being anxious to get to that place, expecting to find letters from home. I was surprised at the vast amount of travel in this new country. There seemed to be constant crowds of teams, and men on horseback and on foot going both ways, traveling with eager pace amidst incessant and suffocating clouds of dust. At

length, casting my eyes over the dusty plain, I saw the long-sought city at the distance of two miles. Quickening my pace, I was soon in Sacramento, but faint and weary with this march beneath the powerful beams of a cloudless sun, and summer-like atmosphere of the valley. I endeavored to console myself with the reflection, that I had now reached the goal, and ultimate limit of this long and hazardous pilgrimage to Mammon's temple; and while death had closed the career of thousands who had fallen by the way, my life had been spared. I had abundant cause of gratitude to the Giver of all good. I had surveyed Nature's grandest works, and had contemplated scenery, where, undisturbed by man, earth still reposes in all her primitive loveliness and grandeur. I never before so fully realized the beauty of the following lines from *Thompson's Seasons*.

Should fate command me to the farthest verge  
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,  
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun  
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam  
Flames on th' Atlantic isles; 'tis nought to me:  
Since God is ever present, ever felt,  
In the void waste as in the city full;  
And where He vital breathes there must be joy.  
When e'en at last the solemn hour shall come,  
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,  
I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers,  
Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go  
Where Universal Love not smiles around,  
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns;  
From seeming Evil still educing Good,  
And better thence again, and better still,  
In infinite progression. But I lose  
Myself in Him, in Light Ineffable!  
Come then, expressive Silence, muse His praise.

Distance, twenty-five miles.

Distance from Illinois to Sacramento city, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two miles.

## ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR.

Before I proceed with my next chapter, I will say a word in reference to myself. Having now resided in California above two years, and having visited the principal cities and towns, and traveled extensively through the mining region, I feel somewhat prepared to present the reader with a condensed view of the whole scene. My descriptions of scenery, and relation of facts, will be mostly confined to what has fallen under my own observation.

I supported myself in traveling, by giving popular lectures on scientific subjects. At times, I attempted to labor at mining, but was obliged to desist on account of my health. During my residence in the country, I was confined for a long time by sickness, which I do not attribute to the climate, but to fatigue and exposure. One design I had in undertaking this hazardous enterprise, was to gain a competency of this world's goods. In this I was not alone. Neither was I singular in failing to accomplish this object.

Another object, and that not the least, which I had in view, has been attained. I desired to explore the interior of North America. This I have done, to a high degree of satisfaction. Thus much I have said in reference to myself, a subject to which I may have no further occasion to advert.

## CHAPTER VII.

Dimensions and Boundaries.—Inhabitants.—Chinese—French.—Kanakas.—Americans.—Animals.—Birds.—Reptiles and Insects.—Fishes.—Spanish Cattle and Horses.—Productions.—Trees, Shrubs, and Grasses.—Flowers.—Rivers and Lakes.—Mountains.—Cities and Towns.—Climate.—Mystery Explained.—Height of the Thermometer.—General Remark.—Central Valley and the Mines.—Western Slope.—Hilly Zone.—Timbered Zone.—Frigid Zone.—Where the Gold is found.—Amount of Labor—Fluming Rivers.—Canals to work Dry Diggings.—Modes of Collecting the Gold.—Size of Lumps—Gold Region.—Mines Inexhaustible.—Product of Labor—Lottery.

### DIMENSIONS AND BOUNDARIES.

The State of California, is in length, six hundred miles; breadth, two hundred and fifty miles. The number of square miles, is one hundred and fifty thousand, or one hundred millions of acres. The lands have been classified as follows, by the State Geologist:

First rate lands, requiring no irrigation, thirty millions of acres. Second rate lands, very productive, but require irrigation, thirty millions of acres. Mountains, forests, deserts, and drowned lands, fifty millions of acres.

According to this statement, it will be seen that the State is capable of sustaining from its own soil a great population. If the fertile lands alone were as well improved, and as densely populated as England, it would

support at least twenty-five millions of people—a consummation that may be attained before the close of another century.

The number of inhabitants at present, including Indians, may amount to five hundred thousand, nearly the whole of whom, except the natives, have arrived since 1848. The State has Oregon on the north, Utah Territory on the east, Southern California on the south, and the Pacific Ocean on the west. The line dividing this State from Oregon, is the forty-second parallel of north latitude.

#### INHABITANTS.

No country contains so heterogeneous an assemblage of human beings. Here are people from all the nations of Europe and America, to which are added great numbers of Kanakas, Malays, Australians and Chinese. Nearly every language on earth is spoken, and the confusion of tongues is like that which is said to have been witnessed at the building of Babel. The dress is as diversified as the language.

#### THE CHINESE.

Of foreigners, the Chinese are the most numerous class, and are thought to amount to forty thousand. They are temperate, industrious and peaceable, attending to their own business without meddling with that of others. Their personal appearance would seem to denote some lack of both physical and mental energy. The dress they wear, and their long queues, give them a feminine appearance, resembling women rather than men. Their hats are made of stiff splints of bamboo,



and are as unpliant as a basket made of oak. They have broad, round brims, with conical crowns, and are a heavy, clumsy article, but durable as the life of the wearer. Their shoes are equally clumsy. Their pantaloons are extremely wide, resembling petticoats, and a short garment, something like a loose gown, completes their external costume. I have frequently met on the road crowds of these people, consisting of hundreds, each one having his mining tools, clothing and provisions, suspended at each end of a pole, and balanced across the shoulder. Although they appear so effeminate, yet the enormous loads they carry denotes great bodily strength. With these burdens they will climb the steep mountains, seldom setting down their load to rest. They have been from infancy inured to incessant toil. The complexion of the Chinese men is, with some exceptions, about the same as the Malays, Kanakas, and American Indians. Indeed, the Diggers in California regard them as intruders, and style them "China Indians," a tribe which they think have no business here. The Chinese are good mechanics, and it is said nearly all can read and write their own language, and are expert in keeping accounts. In trading and doing business, they are remarkably precise, and rarely make a mistake. Unprincipled men, both Europeans and Americans, take advantage of the peaceable dispositions of the Chinese, and if they happen to find them in good diggings, will drive them away, and take possession of their claims. A dozen armed white men will drive a thousand of these Celestials, as easily as they would a flock of timorous sheep. Phrenologically speaking, they lack firmness, destruc-

tiveness, and combativeness. If there were no worse men in California than these Celestials, there would be less trouble, and less call for the services of Judge Lynch.

The Chinamen seem to be satisfied with small gains, and hence generally work in diggings that white men have condemned and abandoned ; but should these places happen to prove better than was anticipated, they are commonly soon expelled by the more unscrupulous whites. In the cities, these people are found in great numbers, sometimes occupying whole streets. Some have stores of Asiatic goods. Many are employed as cooks, in which business they excel, others keep restaurants, laundries, or carry on the fishing business, &c. I have never seen a Chinaman so far reduced as to ask charity. There are a few Chinese women here, but they are abandoned characters.

No Chinaman has as yet removed his family to this country. It is said that some of these people here will eat rats, and of these there is an abundant supply, and of three varieties : wharf-rats, Chinese white rats, and a variety indigenous in the country. In eating, the Chinese use neither knives, forks or spoons, but take their food by the aid of two straight sticks (chop-sticks) about six inches long, which they handle with wonderful dexterity ; but a considerable number of them have already adopted the dress, and in part the customs of the Americans. They are fond of the black teas, but some of them will not use the green, and say it is dried on copper plates, and is poisonous. They keep their clothing and tents more cleanly than any other class of miners.

## FRENCH.

There are great numbers of French people in California, who are eminent for their activity and enterprise in business of all kinds.

The Germans are also numerous, and generally intelligent, and stand high in point of moral worth and respectability.

## KANAKAS.

The Kanakas, (Sandwich Islanders,) are a stout, hardy race, and their appearance denotes a considerable degree of intelligence. At present, these people are in a half-civilized state. The Malays resemble them in appearance.

Mexicans, Peruvians, Chilians, &c., swarm here in great numbers, and, with few exceptions, are a mongrel race, of Indian, African, and Spanish descent. Their complexions differ but little from the native American Indians.

The Digger Indians, according to Gov. McDougall's message, amount to two hundred thousand in California.

## AMERICANS.

The Americans, or Yankees, are here as they are everywhere else, a speculating, enterprising, and go-ahead people. Too many of them seem to regard money as the sovereign good, and hence look with indifference or contempt on every moral principle and intellectual acquirement. California is a country possessing advantages over all others, for studying the physiological peculiarities of the various tribes of human beings.

The natives, and foreigners of all kinds, greatly outnumber the Americans; but these last are now the ruling people, and will, without doubt, remain so.— They hold the chief offices and principal employments in the country.

#### ANIMALS.

Grisly bears are numerous; they inhabit the mountains, and subsist mostly on nuts and other vegetable productions. They are of prodigious strength. They have been caught, weighing sixteen hundred pounds; some are said to be even heavier still. Their hair is long, resembling that of a Newfoundland dog, and the color is that of light sheep's grey. Their motions are quick, and a stroke from one of their huge fore-paws, no other animal can resist. The way in which they are taken alive, is by digging a deep pit, the mouth of which is overlaid with slender poles, and brush, and covered with earth, so as to resemble the common surface of the ground. On this spot, pieces of meat are strewn, by way of bait, in attempting to obtain which the bear breaks through the frail covering, and is precipitated to the bottom of the pit. He is then lassoed, and wound around with numerous ropes, until so completely entangled as to be incapable of resistance. He is then drawn up and confined in a strong cage with iron grates. These animals command a high price, being used for exhibition in traveling caravans; but in California they are principally used in the bull and bear fights, a barbarous entertainment, of which a part of the inhabitants are remarkably fond.

The grisly bear will not attack a man, unless first molested. It is very dangerous, however, to meet a

female having cubs. In such cases, she will, without hesitation, attack any number of assailants, who in such circumstances often find it expedient to seek safety by climbing small trees, which the bear cannot ascend. A party of gentlemen lately took a pleasure and exploring excursion to the burning mountain, near the head of Feather river, and in passing through the wilderness forty or fifty miles, saw thirty-one grisly bears, three of which they killed with revolvers. From this fact, some idea of their numbers may be inferred. The young cubs, when caught, soon become tame, and will perform many playful tricks; they are not very vicious, but still their strength and heft is so great as to render them dangerous pets and playmates.

I saw a hunter, by the name of Wright, (a nephew of the late Governor Wright, of New York,) who had been terribly wounded by a bear. The bear knocked him down by a stroke of his paw, and then with a grip of his enormous jaws, took from his skull a piece of bone several inches square, laying the brain open to the view. Mr. Wright recovered, to the great astonishment of all who saw him. His case excited the sympathy of the people, especially the miners, who contributed with great liberality for his benefit.

Another animal inhabiting the mountains, is the California lion. Its dismal roarings, or yells, are heard in the night, to the great terror of travelers benighted in the wilderness. I have heard of no instance of their having attacked a traveler. A large one will weigh three or four hundred pounds, and they bear some resemblance to the lions of Asia and Africa.

The "tiger-cat" is found in this country. One full-grown, will weigh two hundred pounds. I saw a



young and domesticated one ; it was twice the size of the common cat, and was indeed a beautiful quadruped. There is still another species of cat, wild in the forests, called the "California cat," somewhat smaller than the domestic cat, but the body is much longer, and the tail of immoderate length. They are of a mouse color, and of wonderful activity. One of them is better than several common cats in waging war against rats and mice.

Hares, of extra size, abound all over the country.—Rabbits are plenty, but smaller than those of the Eastern States.

The animals of most importance in the chase, are deer, elk, antelopes, and wild Spanish cattle that have not been marked. Great numbers of these are killed by the hunters, and their flesh finds a ready market, at high prices.

The coyote, so called, is the same animal as the prairie wolf of the Western States.

#### BIRDS.

Small singing birds are not numerous, but crows, hawks, owls and buzzards, abound. There are two varieties of quails ; the mountain quail, and those inhabiting the plains. Both kinds differ greatly in appearance from birds of the same name in the States east of the mountains, being adorned with splendid colors, and having elegant plumes upon their heads. The Bay of San Francisco and its numerous arms, seems to be the grand resort of water-fowl of various kinds. Geese, ducks, and sea-gulls swarm in endless numbers. The two former are shot by hunters, and sold at high

prices in the City markets. I knew a man who had made two thousand dollars in a year, over and above his expenses, by shooting ducks and geese, and sending them to San Francisco.

Sandhill cranes are occasionally seen. These are of the same species as those huge birds so common in the Mississippi valley.

There are thirty varieties of humming-birds of exquisite beauty, that, darting from flower to flower, and displaying their ever-varying hues, seem much to enliven the scenery.

#### REPTILES AND INSECTS.

Lizards, from six to twelve inches in length, are found in great numbers in the forests and in all dry and barren tracts. They are very nimble in their movements, and being armed with sharp claws, will run up the tall pines to their topmost branches. There is a creature resembling a toad with horns and tails, and it is moreover adorned with brilliant colors. Rattlesnakes are found in certain localities whose poisonous bite and other characteristics are the same as in other countries. The toads and lizards are not venomous.

Among the insects, we find the "horrid Tarantula," a creature of the spider kind, whose great size, and bite of mortal poison, renders it an object of terror to all beholders. Their bodies are about the size of an hen's egg, and their legs three or four inches in length, and of the size of a lady's small finger. They are entirely covered with fur of yellow color, and it is said that their bite generally produces death in fifteen minutes.

Flies are neither numerous or troublesome. There are many yellow and black hornets, and a very few

bumble-bees, but the common honey bee is not a native of the country. When imported here, honey-bees soon cease working, instinct teaching them that there is no necessity of laying up stores where there is no Winter, and where flowers bloom throughout the year.

In barren places, there are numerous black crickets, of singular size; I believe at least ten times as large as those insects in the Eastern States.

#### FISHES.

The bays and rivers abound in fish. Perch, salmon, and pike, are taken in great numbers in nets. They are of excellent quality, and the markets are everywhere supplied with this dainty food. There are companies of Chinese fishermen, who take large quantities of sturgeon and other fish, and having dried them in the sun, bind them in packages and sell them to their own countrymen in the mines.

#### SPANISH CATTLE AND HORSES.

There are vast droves of Spanish cattle. Their appearance is similar to the common, domestic kind, but they are of a more lank and slender build, with long, and very sharp horns. They are in a sort of half-civilized state, and will sometimes attack men. In such cases, the only alternative of the traveler is to ascend a tree or rock, inaccessible to his bellowing and ferocious assailants. The owners of these herds take no further care of them than occasionally to have their vaqueros (or herdsmen) drive them into a coral, (or yard,) and mark the young. Some of the old Mexican rancheros, it is said, formerly owned an hundred thousand of these cattle. At that time, cattle were of no value except

for the hides, but since the gold discovery, hides are of no value, but the beef sells in market at prices ranging from fifteen to thirty cents per pound. The change of times has made some of these old rancheros immensely rich. In 1851, I saw an advertisement in handbill form posted in public places along the Yuba river. The signer offered a reward of five hundred dollars to any person who would give information against any individual, who had or might kill any of the cattle belonging to him, and branded with his mark. He stated in the bill, that he owned thirty-five thousand head of cattle between the Yuba and Feather rivers.

The Spanish horses are equally numerous, and are owned and managed in a similar manner, and are in a similar state as to domestication. Many of these horses are active, and of beautiful forms; but the difficulty of teaching them to labor is so great, that you may buy a fine Spanish horse for twenty-five dollars, when an American horse of the same age, heft, and activity, would sell for one hundred dollars. Cows and oxen in vast numbers, have been driven here from the States since the gold discovery; but still, such animals bear an extravagant price. Oxen are from two to four hundred dollars per yoke, and cows from two to three hundred dollars per head.

Swine are imported from Chili, Mexico, Oregon, China, and the Sandwich Islands, and are sold for high prices. A sow weighing two hundred, and having six or eight pigs, will sell for two hundred dollars, a sufficient sum of money to purchase one hundred and sixty acres of land in the Western States. Common dunghill fowls have generally sold for five dollars

apiece, and eggs for four dollars per dozen. The price of a sheep is an ounce of gold. Since the gold discovery, the price of stock has continually advanced. Although prices are so high, yet there is but little danger of an absolute famine in California. The mines, plains, and mountains, could furnish a supply of food should all other sources fail.

#### PRODUCTIONS.

Cabbages, onions, turnips, and all garden vegetables, attain a degree of perfection unknown in any other country. The same may be said of potatoes. At the Agricultural State Fair, solid cabbage heads were exhibited, sixty-six inches in circumference, and turnips too large to put one in a half-bushel measure.

Potatoes, melons, squashes, &c., of corresponding magnitudes. A beet was shown weighing forty-seven pounds, while in the productions of wheat, California may challenge a comparison with the most fertile region of the globe. Eighty, and even an hundred bushels of barley or wheat, are said to be no unusual yield for an acre of land in one season.

#### TREES, SHRUBS AND GRASSES.

The forests consist of two or three varieties of oak, several of pine, balsam fir, and redwood or mountain cedar, all of which, in certain localities, grow to great size and perfection. There are several species of shrubs, which, in the proper season, are covered with gay flowers, and add rare beauty to the landscape. The *Manseneta* shrub grows in a thick cluster of stalks, the bark of a red color, and smooth as if varnished, having



abundance of smooth leaves of a pea-green hue, and covered with a profusion of white and red flowers. It abounds in all the mountain tracts.

Oats, timothy, and clover grass, are the natural productions of the soil, especially upon, and around the coast range of mountains. It is impossible to conceive of a landscape more inviting, than these immense natural fields of grain and grass. You may travel fifty miles through an uninterrupted field of oats. They are of the common variety, but growing wild, the kernels of grain are small. The clover and timothy are the same as those cultivated in the eastern States, but grow here with a rank luxuriance. All these are mown and used for hay. Great herds of wild cattle and horses feed upon these natural pastures. The plains and the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, in time of Spring, are covered with wild grass of several different varieties.

#### FLOWERS.

In March and April, the whole valley of the Sacramento is literally covered with gay flowers of various colors, but those of a bright yellow are most prevalent, giving the whole plain an appearance as though covered with gold leaf.

#### RIVERS AND LAKES.

The chief rivers are the Sacramento and San Joachin. They both discharge their waters into the Bay of San Francisco. The course of the first is from north to south; that of the last, in an opposite direction. The former is about twice the size of the latter. The valley through

which these streams meander, is four hundred miles in length, by fifty in breadth. These main streams receive numerous tributaries descending from the mountains, bounding the valley upon the east and west. The tide rises in the Sacramento eighty miles from its mouth. There are many ponds among the mountains, and two or three lakes of considerable size, particularly one, said to be seventy miles in length. Towards the south end of the Great Valley is Tulare lake, one hundred miles long. Pyramid lake, is so called, on account of an immense rock in the form of a pyramid that rises majestically from the midst of its waters. The principal bays are San Francisco and Humboldt.

#### MOUNTAINS.

The Sierra Nevada, and coast range, are the principal chains, besides which, there are many mountains that stand independent of either of these principal ranges. The Butte mountains rise from the plain in the forks of the Feather and Sacramento rivers. The highest mountain in the State, is Shasta Butte, the summit of which is seventeen thousand feet above the level of the ocean. In the Sierra Nevada chain, are numerous summits said to be from twelve to fifteen thousand feet in height. The region of perpetual snow, in this latitude, may be found at an altitude of about nine or ten thousand feet. The coast range seems to be more than half as high as the Sierra Nevada, and on some of the peaks, snow lies a considerable part of the year.

#### CITIES AND TOWNS.

The cities will take rank, as to population, nearly in the following order: San Francisco, Sacramento, Stock-

ton, Benicia, Sonora, Marysville, Placerville, Los Angeles, San Jose, Shasta, Auburn, &c.

The number of inhabitants in San Francisco, is estimated at forty thousand. It has taken its rise, since 1848, but is now a place of far greater trade and business than would be inferred from the number of inhabitants. The harbor is at all times crowded with the ships of all nations. It stands upon the strait which connects the Bay with the Pacific.

Sacramento contains fifteen or twenty thousand people. It stands on the eastern bank of the Sacramento river, sixty miles from its mouth. Much of the goods destined for the mining region is landed at this place, which makes it a point of immense commercial importance. It is situated in the midst of a rich agricultural district.

Stockton is a large and flourishing place, situated on an arm of the Bay. It is a central depot for the southern mines.

Marysville is beautifully situated in the Forks of the Feather and Yuba rivers—is a steamboat landing, and a place of great business. A thousand mules, loaded with goods for the mines, besides many wagons, often leave this city in the course of one day. Besides the aforementioned cities, there are a vast number of smaller towns scattered over the country, especially in the mining region. These last often enjoy but a transient prosperity, being suddenly built up, upon the discovery of some rich placer, or quartz mine, and as suddenly abandoned upon the failure of the “diggings.” The beginning and end of some large towns does not occupy a duration of more than a year. In my travels,

I have seen numerous towns, in which the houses are without tenants, and are fast going to ruin, although less than three years since the first habitation was erected. The whole population of the mining country is as fluctuating and unstable as the waves of the sea.

#### CLIMATE.

There are two seasons—the wet and the dry. The wet season corresponds with the Winter months in the Eastern States. Winter can hardly be said to visit this country, except upon the mountains. We seldom witness frost in the Sacramento valley. Great quantities of snow sometimes falls on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, but even in such cases the mercury seldom falls much below the freezing point. Autumn, in one sense, may be said to last through the year, for by irrigating the land, certain kinds of crops may be matured at almost any time you desire. The rains continue, in general, but a brief period, though an immense quantity of water falls, swelling the streams suddenly to a fearful height. The American river, a branch of the Sacramento, has been known to rise twenty-five feet in twelve hours, and instances have occurred in which miners, encamped near the bank, or upon some bar or island, have been surrounded and swept to a watery grave. Four weeks of stormy weather in a year, I think, would be an average for the three Winters I tarried in the country. Except during the rains, California enjoys a cloudless sky, and an atmosphere of wonderful serenity.

The rivers all have their sources in the snowy mountains, and their waters are consequently of the purest

quality. I consider the climate as one of the most healthy on earth. There seems to be no natural cause of disease in the country. Most persons, soon after they arrive here, increase in heft, and admitting they are temperate, have countenances of a more healthful hue. In no other part of the world could human beings endure such exposures and privations as they do here, without soon meeting with sickness or death.

Thunder-storms are almost unknown here, and the wonderful height to which the timber grows, is sufficient proof that violent winds never visit this peaceful clime. But the rain sometimes descends in torrents, as though "the windows of Heaven" were opened; the snows on the mountains are dissolved, and down rushes a thousand streams;—the great river Sacramento soon rises over its banks, turning a large portion of the valley into an inland sea. In these deluges, great numbers of cattle, and other animals, are annually drowned, and human beings sometimes share the same fate.

California extends to the forty-second degree north latitude, and yet, from certain causes, enjoys a climate which in many particulars resembles that of countries lying within the tropics. But little or no rain falls from May until November.

#### MYSTERY EXPLAINED,

People in the Northern States cannot easily be made to believe that California can be a superior country for agricultural purposes, seeing there is a continued drouth for six months in the year, but let them consider that the New England, and Middle States are agricultural districts, although vegetation is entirely suspended du-



ring six months, not by drouth, but by means of frost and snow. Crops in California can be sown or planted at any time, and if this is done in the proper season, they become so far matured during the rainy season as to stand in no further need of watering.

There are two very good reasons why crops attain to such unusual perfection here, viz : the great fertility of the soil in the valleys, and the uniform mildness of the climate.

#### HEIGHT OF THE THERMOMETER.

In the city of San Francisco, the warmest season, or at least the most pleasant, is during the Winter months. The same is the fact in reference to the whole of the country lying between the coast range and the Pacific. Here the northern gales prevail during Summer, and the southern during Winter. The reverse is the case in the great Sacramento valley.

I have seen the thermometer rise in the shade to one hundred and fifteen degrees, Fahrenheit. This was in August, 1851, at Rose's Bar, on the Yuba river. The place is at the bottom of a valley, with steep mountains on each side. In San Jose valley, and all the southern part of the State, the climate will compare with that of southern France and Italy. The grape is here cultivated and produced in such abundance, that the markets in all the cities and towns, in the proper season, are crowded with this delicious fruit. Pears of extraordinary size are equally abundant. The soil, in all the principal valleys, is of surpassing fertility, and farms, on an immense scale, are already under cultivation. The most important agricultural districts are the valleys

of San Jose, Sacramento, San Joachin, Nappa, and the level country lying around Humboldt Bay.

#### GENERAL REMARK.

Agriculture will ultimately become the great and leading interest in California, and if the great Pacific Railway is ever constructed, the commerce of Asia, Australia, and the Islands, will be deluged upon this shore, in which event San Francisco will become the great commercial depot of two Continents.

#### CENTRAL VALLEY AND THE MINES.

This valley is four or five hundred miles in length, by about fifty miles in average breadth. A part of it consists of drowned lands, generally covered with tules, a kind of rush, growing thick and very tall. These lands may be drained by artificial means, and converted into rice fields of great value. The Chinese would be competent to perform this work, if disposed to do so. The two principal rivers run serpentine courses through the valley. A strip of oak timber commonly grows along the banks, a mile or two in breadth. Over the rest of the plain the timber is oak, but very scattering.

All these trees have large round tops, and an abundance of leaves. Sacramento City is near the center of the valley, in a direction east and west. Ascend a steeple in this place, and cast your eyes around, and you will have a prospect of surpassing beauty and grandeur. To the east you will see the Sierra Nevada mountains, stretching north and south as far as sight can reach, the summit of the ridge covered with vast bodies of snow, white and glimmering in the midst of

Summer, and appearing like a white cloud of interminable length, running along the horizon. At the same time you can distinctly see the whole western slope, near a hundred miles in width, and covered with forests of evergreen timber. To the west, the coast range of mountains is distinctly visible, and looking blue in the distance. The vast plain around you, at some points is dotted with farms, but generally covered with grass, and sprinkled with trees, giving it the appearance of a grand park, or an immense orchard.

In picturesque, beautiful, and sublime scenery, no country in the world surpasses California.

#### WESTERN SLOPE.

The great western slope of the Sierra Nevada, may very properly be divided into three zones, though I am not aware that such a division has hitherto been suggested.

#### HILLY ZONE.

Commencing at the eastern limit of the Sacramento valley, you ascend, moderately, forty miles. This is the first zone, and runs the length of the State. The climate is similar to that in the valley, though somewhat colder. It includes nearly all the gold region, is covered with scattering trees, pine and oak, of several varieties each, with occasionally redwood or cedar, and a large amount of splendid shrubbery, particularly the manseneta. This tract is covered with grass in Winter and Spring, has a countless number of small valleys, well adapted to gardening, is a good grazing country a part of the year, and its surface is as varied and de-

lightful as can well be conceived. Through this zone, the hills are of moderate height. There are many large swells of land, rounding over from north to south; the soil is not stony, though many huge piles of loose rocks are here and there dispersed.

#### TIMBERED ZONE.

The second zone I call the timber region, thirty miles wide, is studded in general with a thick growth of the most gigantic trees. Here the mountains are high, the streams run in valleys of immense depth. The timber is pine, mountain cedar, and balsam fir; if any oaks are seen, they are low and scrubby.

#### FRIGID ZONE.

The third, is the frigid zone, from ten to twenty miles in width, and extends from the timbered zone to the summit of the mountains. Here is but little vegetation, and Winter holds his dreary reign through the year. The objects that here meet the view, are crags and rocks, awful precipices and cataracts, and naked peaks, lifting their hoary heads on high, overtopping the clouds, and looking down upon the storm.

#### WHERE THE GOLD IS FOUND.

The first zone, or mining region, is a most enchanting country in appearance. The prevailing rocks are slate and quartz, though granite and other primitive formations may be found, and in some localities are veins of blue limestone, also a kind of coarse white marble. Through this tract, gold is very generally diffused. It is found in every possible locality; in the beds of streams, in the banks and bars running by the

side of the same, in gulches and ravines, beneath the surface of small valleys, on benches of land, on the sides of hills, on the tops of hills and mountains, sometimes on the very surface of the earth, and sometimes at a great depth below it, and very often in the quartz rock, considered by geologists as the prime source of all the gold in California. The supposition is, that the rocks containing the gold have decayed and changed to earth, after which, by means of rains and floods, the deposits have been washed or rolled down the sides of the hills, until finally lodged in the various situations in which it is at present found.

The principal part of the gold is obtained upon, or near the surface of the "bed rock." This bed rock is found at various depths, from a few inches to several hundred feet. At present, few diggings have penetrated deeper than one hundred feet, except the tunnels, or horizontal perforations into the sides of mountains.

#### AMOUNT OF LABOR.

In the mining regions, the traveler is surprised at every step, at the vast amount of labor that seems to have been expended in the search for gold, all of which has been performed within the short period of four years. It looks as though centuries would be requisite to accomplish so great an amount of work. Even in 1850, two years after the gold was first discovered, you might have traveled hundreds of miles on the banks of rivers that cross the mining region, and you would see on each side of the streams that the earth, gravel and rocks, to a considerable width, had all been torn up to the depth of about six feet, washed clean, and the



sand and pebbles thrown into large heaps, presenting an appearance remarkably dry and sterile. Nearly every ravine, and they are countless in number, and some of them many miles in length, had been worked out in the same manner. In addition to all this, innumerable shafts, like wells, had been sunk all over the country, and many hills, and even mountains, perforated in all directions, and at all points, by shafts running in horizontal directions, some of these penetrating more than a thousand feet into the mountain side.

#### FLUMING RIVERS.

The damming and fluming operations for draining the beds of rivers for the purpose of obtaining gold, otherwise inaccessible, are still greater works of labor and cost. In 1851, the flumes were constructed of pine planks, nearly all of which were cut by hand with whip-saws. This year, the total length of all the flumes on the various rivers, amounted to more than an hundred miles. The flumes are usually from ten to sixteen feet wide, and three feet deep, and are tightened with gripes every six feet, and rest upon strong timbers running several feet above the original level of the stream. Between the planks is corking, to render them water tight; and to further secure them against leakage, the bottom is often covered with a lining of cotton cloth. By means of a dam, the whole current of the river is turned into the flume, the descent being rapid, the water moves with such velocity that men have been drowned in a flume in which the water was less than two feet in depth. If a man falls in accidentally, the current instantly takes his feet from under him, and it is the

next thing to an impossibility, without assistance, to recover his standing. After the river is turned into the flume, there are many deep places in the channel, in which large ponds of deep water remain. This must all be discharged, and this gigantic work is accomplished by means of a multitude of powerful pumps, and these are kept in constant operation by means of ponderous under-run water-wheels, placed in the flume and driven by the current. I have often been in a position upon some projecting point of a mountain, where at a single view, I could see a river thus flumed for several miles. The appearance is singular indeed. The river seems to be all alive and in motion. Hundreds of wheels are rolling, each with its accompanying pumps working, and through the entire distance, throngs of men of various colors, with blue or red woolen shirts, broad brimmed hats, and long Jew beards, digging with picks and shovels on each side, or immediately under the rushing torrent coursing it way over their heads.

#### CANALS TO WORK DRY DIGGINGS.

The other costly works are the canals, dug for the purpose of conducting water, in some instances, forty miles along the mountain side, continually approximating the summit of the ridge where the dry diggings are situated, and where the water is needed to wash the particles of gold from the dirt in which it is found. The fluming and canaling operation are performed by organised joint-stock companies.

The steam mills for crushing and grinding the quartz rocks, are also works of cost and labor. The hard flint-like quartz must be ground to an impalpable powder,

when by means of quicksilver, the fine particles of gold dust are collected and saved.

#### MODES OF COLLECTING THE GOLD.

The process of obtaining gold has already passed through many changes. When the mines were first discovered, the dirt was washed in common tin pans, and sometimes in an earthen dish. This method was soon superseded by the rocker, an implement very much like a common cradle for infants. At length, "Long Toms" were introduced. These are twelve feet long and two feet wide, made by nailing three boards together like a trough, the bottom of the lower end consisting of sheet iron perforated with holes like a sieve, through which the particles of gold fall into a box placed underneath the sieve. A stream of water pours into the upper end of the tom, which lies in an inclined position, so as to give the water a rapid descent. The dirt and gravel is thrown into the tom and stirred with a shovel or hoe until washed clean, when the pebbles and gravel are shoveled out at the lower end. The tom is now mostly abandoned, and a mode adopted called "sluicing." By sluicing, a far greater amount of dirt can be washed by any given number of hands. A sluice is simply a very long trough made of a series of boards, united at the ends, and lying inclined like the tom, and having a swift stream of water running through its entire length. It may be extended at pleasure by adding other joints of troughs, and a large company of men can thus work at advantage at one of these sluices. Sometimes a sluice is nothing but a ditch cut in the ground, and running down an inclined plain

on the side of a hill. Quicksilver machines, an apparatus for washing, were once in high repute, but are now mostly given up. Quicksilver is however frequently used in sluices, for the purpose of gathering the finer particles of gold. The amalgam is then retorted, evaporating the quicksilver, and leaving the gold in the retort. Gold can be separated from quicksilver, by straining it through a piece of fine cloth or deer-skin. The dust in this case, is still coated with quicksilver, and is of the color of that metal until put on a shovel or a piece of sheet iron, and heated over the fire to a red heat. This restores the gold to its natural hue.

#### SIZE OF LUMPS—GOLD REGION.

The value of gold obtained by a day's work by these different modes is so various, that no rule can be given. A man may make a fortune in a week, but is more likely to come out in debt after months of toil.

The particles of gold are of all possible sizes and forms, from the fineness of flour to lumps of an hundred pounds. The largest lump of pure native gold that I have seen, weighed thirteen pounds and six ounces, and was found near the Middle Fork of the American river.

The length of the gold region is not yet determined, but it is known to extend nearly eight hundred miles, running the length of California, and extending into Oregon.

#### MINES INEXHAUSTIBLE.

It is not likely that these mines will be entirely exhausted in centuries to come, but the richest placers seem to be worked out already, and in a few years,

mining will probably become a business of secondary importance, and the miners, for a general rule, the poorest in the community. Agriculture, Commerce, and the Arts, will be the leading interests in this, as they always must be in all countries. When the mines begin to fail, another business of great importance will gradually come into notice. California can supply ship, and other timber, in quantities sufficient to supply the markets of the globe. This timber is in the interior, upon the mountain slopes, but railways, running along the dividing ridges between the rivers, may be constructed, and these will be able to roll this valuable article in endless quantities down to the Bay, from whence it may be exported, wherever commerce may require. This important business has been already commenced in the adjoining Territory. In the fall of 1852, a British man-of-war came down from Vancouver's Island, and anchored at San Francisco. Her business was to charter twelve merchant ships to proceed to Oregon, and freight with cargoes of masts, and take them to England for the use of the Royal Navy.

California has sources of exhaustless wealth, independent of the gold mines. Her true riches consists not in her placers, or quartz rocks, but in her climate and soil, her commercial advantages, her rivers of pure water, and last, though not least, her forests of pine and cedar.

The value of gold obtained from the mines annually, has, up to this time, constantly increased, but it must be understood, that there has been a vast addition to the numbers engaged in the business. The average product of labor has in the mean time, greatly diminished,



and as a natural consequence, as well as proof of the fact, wages have fallen.

PRODUCT OF LABOR—LOTTERY.

If the truth could be known, and an accurate estimate be made of every day's work, and of every dollar expended in these far-famed mines since their discovery, no doubt it would be found that the average product of labor has been at least as low as in any other State in the Union during the same period. These are facts that the fortunate ones, and the speculating and trading men are loth to admit; nevertheless, I believe they are true to the letter. That thousands have made sudden fortunes in the mines, I will not deny; but there are tens of thousands who have scarcely realized their expenses as yet, though many of them have been in the country two or three years. Many miners have less money now, than they possessed when they arrived here, and they are neither spendthrifts or gamblers, but moral, industrious, persevering men. It has become proverbial with miners, that mining is a lottery, a game of chance, and we all know that every man does not draw a prize who purchases a lottery ticket. I have known worthless rowdies go out and strike a fortune in a few days; and I have seen very worthy men about to give up in despair, after years of fruitless exertion. In mining, the "race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," but time and chance have much to do with these golden operations. A strange delusion on this subject has pervaded the world, but time will soon dispel it. That wise and benevolent Power that rules the Universe, never intended intelligent creatures

to rely on games of chance for their subsistence, but upon the regular and reliable pursuits of life. All games of chance are of a demoralizing tendency, and as mining is something of that nature, the result is as might have been anticipated, and as may be seen in the dark moral aspect that all parts of California present.

Vice fills the Great Valley, rises above the hills, and submerges the mountains. But all these things are under the control of unlimited Wisdom and Benevolence, and this Power may in due time bring peace and order from this frightful moral chaos, and cause this "general deluge" of iniquity to retire from off a Land blessed by Nature with Heaven's choicest gifts.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Rivers—Bars—Ascents—Mule Roads.—Sliding Timber down the steep Mountain Sides.—Lay of the Land.—Curiosities in the River Beds.—Petrifactions.—Ancient Arms dug up.—The Table Mountains.—Curious positions of Slate Rocks.—Hills of rotten Pebbles.—Geological Remarks.—Volcanic Appearances.—Character and Customs of Digger Indians.—Morals in California.—Preachers and Religion.—Bull and Bear Fights.—Splendor of Gambling Saloons.—Great Natural Advantages.—Question Answered.—Capriciousness of Fortune.—Scientific Mining.—The Truth hard to Ascertain.—Expulsion of Foreigners.—Political Economy.—Sacramento River.—Bay and City of San Francisco.

Under this head, I throw together various observations without any attempt at systematic arrangement.

### RIVERS—BARS—ASCENTS—MULE ROADS.

First.—The further you follow the courses of the rivers up towards their sources in the Sierra Nevada, you find the mountains that rise on each side of the stream the more steep and lofty. Through the upper portion even of the mining region, the mountains come down on either side of the streams at an angle of forty-five or fifty degrees. A share of the distance you find a narrow strip of level land close to the stream, varying from a few feet to ten or fifteen rods in width. A considerable portion of the way, there is only room for

the river itself. The level places, called bars, are a little above low-water mark, and are composed of rounded rocks, pebbles, and gravel, and often contain rich deposits of the precious dust. In the season of mining, great numbers of tents, and crowds of men throng these bars. Many miners cook their own board at their own tents, but you will generally find at such stations one or more large cloth houses, in which liquors are retailed. There is also a store of goods and provisions, and a good supply of gambling apparatus, especially the ever present cards; also, indifferent accommodations for fifty or an hundred boarders. All the goods and provisions are brought down to the bars upon packed mules. The steep ascents of the mountain sides rising from the rivers are from one to four miles; altogether too steep to ascend in a direct course. The mule path, therefore, runs in a zigzag line from bottom to top of the declivity. When you arrive at the summit, the river may sometimes still be seen at an immense depth below you, appearing like a small rivulet, and looks as though you might toss a stone from where you stand down to the stream below.

#### SLIDING TIMBER DOWN THE STEEP MOUNTAIN SIDES.

There is a vast amount of pine logs and other timber slid and rolled down these steep mountains, to be used for damming and other purposes on the rivers. This operation is rare sport. The logs being drawn to the brink of the declivity by the aid of teams, are then set rolling, and seldom stop until they reach the bottom. I have frequently observed their progress while descending in this manner, a distance of two or three miles.

The heavy logs come down with accelerated velocity, sometimes raising a cloud of dust that for a time conceals them from sight, soon they emerge from the cloud and striking a rock at the brink of a precipice, give a furious bound without again touching the earth for the distance of a thousand feet. In this impetuous style they come down the rough descent leaping, bounding, smoking, and crashing, until they reach the bank of the river. In 1842, a man having a family, just arrived from the States, was killed at a bar on the middle fork of the American, by a log that had descended the mountain, and by some means had taken an unexpected course. The man with his family was in the house, near the river bank, when hearing the approaching thunder of the descending timber, he ran out at the door and got near a rock at no great distance from the house, when the log with a bound, leaped completely over the house, and struck the unfortunate man, severing the body in two parts. A subscription was immediately raised for the support of the family, the liberality of miners being proverbial.

A mule is a remarkably sure footed animal, but in packing, their heavy burthens of boxes, casks, and sacks down these frightful steeps, have been known to slip, lose their balance, and roll down a thousand feet until dashed against rocks, and instantly killed.

#### LAY OF THE LAND.

The sides of these steeps are talcose slate rock, bare in some places, but generally covered over with a thin coating of redish earth, on which is a very tangled growth of small bushes. Arriving at the top of the



ascent, you commonly find a tract somewhat level, or rolling, until proceeding a few miles, you arrive at the brow of a similar descent down to some other stream. Such is the general character of the road through all the mining region, in traveling in a direction north and south. This elevated land is well covered with timber of a suitable size for use. Many steam saw-mills are now in operation among these splendid groves. The price of boards at the mill, January 1st, 1853, is one hundred dollars per thousand feet.

#### CURIOSITIES IN THE RIVER BEDS.

I have traveled many miles directly in the beds of rivers, at times when the water had all been drained by means of flumes and pumps. It is curious to observe the beautiful forms into which the rocks have been worn by the action of the stream. Rocks, in some instances as large as an ordinary house, polished over smooth as glass, and furrowed in deep grooves like fluted columns, and looking more like a work of art than of nature. I also observed on horizontal benches of rock, an hundred feet above the present level of the stream, numerous holes, in shape resembling a common dinner pot.—Some were ten feet deep, and six feet wide, beautifully polished upon the inside, having a few pebbles lying in the bottom, the agent, no doubt, in carving out these curious cavities. I noticed one immense rock twelve feet in thickness, lying in the bed of the stream. The position of this rock had evidently been changed from a perpendicular to a horizontal one. In it was one of those pot-like cavities, penetrating in a horizontal direc-

tion, the mouth being down stream, and the bottom worn completely through.

#### PETRIFACTIONS.

Among natural curiosities in this part of the world, must be mentioned teeth and bones of unprecedented size, that belonged to some extinct race of animals. These have been discovered by miners in deep excavations. There is an abundance of petrifications, especially of timber. I have seen whole trees completely changed to the hardest kinds of flint or quartz, yet retaining their original shape, exhibiting the grain of the wood, and texture of the bark. They were species of trees now growing in the vicinity. This petrified timber has been found fifty, and even an hundred feet below the surface, and covered with strata of rocks.

Numerous petrifications are found in tunneling those vast deposits of debris, which are considered as slides from the mountains. These slides now annually occur during the rainy season. A great mass of earth and rocks upon some mountain side, gives suddenly away, and sweeping everything in its course, slides or rolls with a tremendous crash into the valley below. During the rains of 1852-3, a slide on an immense scale occurred a few miles above Downieville on the Yuba river. The mass rolled into the channel, damming the stream to such a height, that for a time it was thought that the river would take a new direction. I have not yet learned the result. A number of miners did but barely escape being buried under the falling mountain.

## ANCIENT ARMS DUG UP.

On Feather river, I witnessed the disinterment of a quantity of ancient Indian war-like instruments. They were fifteen feet below the surface of the solid earth. They were made of flint and another hard species of rock. Several were double edged blades, eighteen inches long, and two in width, with a shank for the purpose of inserting it in the end of a pike-pole. Others were in the form of a polished rod, as round as though turned in a lathe, one end sharpened to a point, and near the other a round hole about the size of a pipe-stem. This implement was about the length of the former, and of the size of a man's finger. The purpose for which they were made, is not so easily determined.

## THE TABLE MOUNTAINS.

I have examined two mountains in California, that are regarded as curiosities. They are called Table-Mountains, and are one hundred and fifty miles apart, one being in the vicinity of Sonora, the other on the west side of Feather river, fifty miles from its junction with the Sacramento. This last, rises immediately at the eastern limit of the Sacramento valley. Its height is about two thousand feet, is flat on the summit like a table. From the summit downwards one hundred feet, there is a perpendicular precipice, and from thence to the bottom, an inclined plane. The size of the table is twenty or thirty square miles, and covered with crumbled stone resembling a Macadamised road. The other is quite similar in size and appearance. This last, I did not ascend, but did so in reference to the former, and from its summit, had an extensive and splendid

prospect of Sacramento plain, the Butte mountains, the eastern and western ranges, and other objects of interest.

#### CURIOUS POSITIONS OF SLATE ROCKS.

In the mining region, slate, as before observed, is the prevailing rock. The strata never lies in a horizontal direction, but sets up edge-wise, not quite perpendicular, but somewhat slanting. The mountains being composed of this species of slate, have an unusual appearance to one not familiar with such formations. On the high lands, lying between the river, consisting of gentle swells, are large tracts studded thickly over with thin slabs of slate projecting from the surface five or six feet, and two or three in width, and seen at a short distance, bear a striking resemblance to a grave yard, where thousands of monuments appear in a leaning attitude.

#### HILLS OF ROTTEN PEBBLES.

In the mining country, I noticed many hills of curious formation. They consisted of an immense mass of rounded pebbles, now wholly or partially decomposed. Though originally composed of the hardest kind of rock, their appearance at present is as though crushed together by their weight, something like a heap of rotten apples or potatoes, yet retaining in a good degree their primitive shapes. Some of these decayed pebble hills have been rich in gold dust. The whole entire State is an interesting field for Geological research, but my limits will permit but a bare hint in relation to this subject. On the sides and tops of lofty mountains, are many water-worn rocks, and heaps of rounded pebbles,

though I am not aware that marine productions have ever been noticed. We therefore arrive, in view of these facts, at the following conclusions :

#### GEOLOGICAL REMARKS.

1st. These mountains were upheaved from the ocean previous to the existence of organised beings in the waters.

2nd. That against the sides, and over the summits of the hills, the waves of old ocean must have rolled and dashed for an inconceivable number of ages.

3rd. After the mountains arose from the bosom of the "great deep," their surfaces were continually acted upon by the elements, decomposing their solid materials, changing them to dust, which, according to the kind of rock from which derived, assumed the form of clay, marl, sand, &c.

4th. The rains falling on the lands thus elevated, gave rise to the streams and rivers, and these have worn out for themselves the channels and the entire valleys through which they now pursue their courses. The great Sacramento valley consists of alluvial deposits, brought down by the floods from the mountains that run upon each side of it.

#### VOLCANIC APPEARANCES.

There is not much external appearance of volcanic agency in California, but we often find in the "diggings," a hard kind of cement, appearing as though it had been melted, often containing gold; also, a kind of cinder, or what is here termed burnt rock. These, and such like specimens, are thought by some, to



amount to proof of volcanic action. I shall give no opinion in reference to the subject, further than this: I regard all the countries on the globe as having been originally upheaved, by the cooling of the heated mass, volcanic agency, or the force of internal fire, and if this be so, we should not be surprised to find in any part of the world, appearances denoting the action of fire. These operations may, be still progressing, and as the land is gradually, though imperceptibly elevated, the ocean is retiring to deeper channels, or narrower limits. This hypothesis will enable us to account for innumerable facts, incapable of explanation upon any other principle.

All the present races of plants and animals on our globe, are evidently nothing more than improved editions of species, and orders of being that existed in former periods of our world. Organic life on this earth, commenced with imperfect specimens, both vegetable and animal, these have ever been improving as the crust of the globe has become better prepared for the development of organised existence. These operations of nature may appear slow and tedious to us, but they are nevertheless sure of accomplishing the desired result. The God of Nature has ever aimed at perfecting his own work.

#### CHARACTER AND CUSTOMS OF DIGGER INDIANS.

The Digger Indians, the natives of California, are to be ranked among the least intelligent of the human race. For them to appear naked or clothed, seems to be a matter of perfect indifference, though at present the squaws generally wear a very dirty calico dress.

Fishing, and the chase, is their dependance for animal food. Their breadstuff consists of the fruit of the nut-bearing pine, and acorns. You will see this fruit stored around their villages in circular cribs, formed by driving stakes in the ground, which are interwoven with small willows. They are four or five feet in diameter, and eight or ten in height. These receptacles are filled with nuts, and covered with grass, or leaves. The squaws pulverize this fruit in rude stone mortars, after which it is cooked in a kind of paste, or pudding. These Indians now visit the numerous slaughter-yards belonging to the whites, and beg the entrails, and other offal, which they carry off on their backs and devour without much cooking or dressing.

I have passed through many of their villages. They make an appearance precisely like a number of common coal-pits for manufacturing charcoal, having a small vent or opening on one side for a door. These burrows are constructed by building, in the first place, a log pen, in pyramidical form; this is overspread with grass and brush, and the whole covered with a considerable thickness of earth. These are their dwelling-houses, and their construction displays less mechanical genius than the habitations of the beaver, or even the muskrat. Every few months they assemble in great numbers for a dance, or festival. These seem to be of two kinds, one being of a religious nature, and the other convivial. At the former, they offer sacrifices to the Being of their dread or adoration, by burning up in a large fire all their best clothing and most valuable trinkets, and other effects. They will dig gold, and purchase shawls, handkerchiefs, belts, beads, hats and

caps, but on these occasions, throw them all, without regret, into the fire. This may possibly be done for the benefit of their deceased relations. The chief performance at the other festival, consists in a most dull and uninteresting dance. I attended, as a spectator, one of these, near Salmon Falls, on the South Fork of the American river, in 1842. About five hundred of the natives had collected. They had constructed a yard or pen, eight rods in diameter, and surrounded it with a high brush fence, except one open space for an entrance. From time to time, thirty or forty Indians, but no squaws, would gather in the center of the arena, all huddled close together without order, and exercise themselves for an hour or two, by standing in one place with their bodies leaning forward, and arms stiff, with elbows bent, and in this attitude merely stepping first with one foot and then with the other, something like soldiers learning to mark time. They were mostly naked, but their heads were ornamented with strings of beads, and the quills of large birds. The dancers, or rather steppers, were the younger men, while a concourse of the aged, together with the squaws and children, stood around gazing upon this, to us, most senseless and stupid entertainment, less intellectual in its character than the gambols of quadrupeds. The music consisted of a continued hissing through the teeth by one of the steppers, or rather between two pieces of wide grass blades, or flags, held between the lips.

The Diggers either burn the bodies of the dead, or else draw the corpse up and fasten it in the top of a tree. They mourn for their deceased relatives, by daubing their faces and necks with tar, and filling

their heavy heads of hair with the same material.—When the tar wears off, the mourning ends. Around their coal-pit villages, you will see a crowd of naked Indians sunning themselves in pleasant weather, while the squaws are busy in preparing acorns, &c., for future use. I have never seen a Digger who seemed to have made much proficiency in learning to speak English, though I am told they generally have some slight acquaintance with the Mexican language.

#### MORALS IN CALIFORNIA.

Morality in California is at the lowest possible standard, though a few respectable persons may be found. In no part of the world does vice of every species stalk abroad with so unblushing a front. Thieves, robbers, and gamblers, infest every place, so that no man who has money is safe, unless he keeps constantly on his guard. Your pockets will be rifled in open day-light, while walking the street, or standing in a store. If the thief should chance to be detected and brought to trial, if he has gold in plenty, he generally escapes justice through bribery, or some quibble of the law. The civil authority seems to be powerless in defending the property or lives of honest citizens. Murders are so common that they scarce elicit a passing remark, being of daily occurrence. This fearful state of society we might naturally expect to find in a country situated like this, where gold is the only object of pursuit, and where there is scarcely any fixed population at all. All are on the move, changing and shifting from one location to another. Nothing seems to be thought of or mentioned, except some scheme to make money. No con-

versation upon any moral or intellectual subject is broached. The whole community, high and low, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, are engaged in one perfect scramble for gold. This one motive absorbs and swallows up every and all other considerations. There are but few here who intend to make this country their permanent residence, hence they feel no interest in its moral and intellectual progress.—Packs of cards are kept in nearly every house, tent, and cabin, and are generally in use either for amusement or gambling. Checkers and chess are seldom played, these games requiring the player to exercise some little thought and reflection. Mental labor of every kind is altogether avoided, and looked upon with contempt by the great mass of Californians. Tippling and profane swearing are all but universal. A residence here at present, is a pilgrimage in a strange land, a banishment from good society, a living death, and a punishment of the worst kind, and the time spent here ought to be considered as a blank period in existence, and accordingly struck from the record of one's days.

In most places, the mob-law has hitherto been the governing power, and hundreds and thousands of supposed criminals have been scourged or hung, independent of the civil authority, and often in defiance of the same. The mob has frequently taken men by force out of the hands of the officers of justice, and hung them "until dead," in spite of threatenings and remonstrances. We must however, confess, that the mob has for a general rule executed justice, though this has been done in a violent, summary and lawless manner.



## PREACHERS AND RELIGION.

There are many preachers in California; some of these follow preaching, and others do not preach at all at present. There are also meeting-houses in the cities and principal towns. Comparatively, but few visit these edifices. Ministers who are settled, however, are well paid for their services, and the general belief is that these gentlemen, as well as others, came to California impelled by the one grand motive, viz: to make their "piles." Not a few, it is said, who professed to preach the Gospel at home, have since their arrival here, concluded to follow one Apostolic example, in becoming all things to all men, and are now actively engaged at the roulette-table, or in dealing monte.

## BULL AND BEAR FIGHTS.

One kind of brutal sport is here extensively practised, viz: bull and bear fighting. A spacious amphitheater is constructed, where two or three thousand persons can be seated out of danger from the ferocious animals. A wild Spanish bull, and a grisly bear, are now tied together by a rope and chain twenty feet in length. The animals, even in this situation, would decline a contest if left to themselves. Two Spaniards, with spears and darts, at length force them into the conflict, which soon proves a terrific struggle for life. The bear keeps up an incessant and loud growling, while the enraged bull roars with fury and tears the ground in his wrath. The bear at length seizes the bull's leg in the grasp of his iron jaws. The bull now bawls mournfully with excessive pain, but soon gaining "resolution from despair" and rage, he plunges his powerful horns into

the sides of his grisly antagonist, whom with repeated close chargings he hooks across the arena. Thus the mighty combatants continue the war, alternately acting upon the offensive and defensive, until one of the parties gasps in death, or surrenders at discretion. In the mean time, flags are waved, brazen trumpets are sounded, and the whole immense concourse rend the air with their reiterated shouts. What exquisite pleasure it must afford a multitude of men and women to look on and see these poor animals thus compelled to mangle and murder each other!

I was once passing by an exhibition of this kind, at Sacramento City, and although at some distance from the amphitheater, could hear the bear crushing the bones of his antagonist.

#### SPLENDOR OF GAMBLING SALOONS.

The most sumptuous and costly edifices in California, are the Gambling Saloons in the Cities. In these are kept fine bands of instrumental and vocal music. The vast halls are illuminated with a profusion of globe lights arranged in clusters—ladies sit at the tables to deal the cards—a splendid bar is kept—food is free for all who choose to partake at certain hours, and indeed, they have every contrivance that ingenuity can devise, to fascinate the crowd, and entice the unwary to their ruin. Thousands rush to these lordly slaughter houses, and generally come out beggars.

#### GREAT NATURAL ADVANTAGES.

Notwithstanding all the evils that exist in this country, yet California is by nature one of the most favored

realms on earth, and one in which are concentrated the greatest variety of advantages. The evils complained of are artificial, and have arisen from the reckless depravity of the mixed multitude who have congregated here from every clime. The moral aspect of the country will improve. Many respectable families have already fixed permanent residences here, especially in the agricultural districts. The unstable floating population, will give place to more permanent settlers. Then will schools and other social institutions arise and flourish. Improvements, public and private of every kind, will move forward with a rapidity unexampled, and an energy irresistible. California will then become an earthly paradise, rivaling in beauty Eden's primitive garden. Green fields will stretch over the broad plains, and through the countless fertile valleys among the mountains, and herdsmen tend their flocks upon a "thousand hills." Imagination can scarcely mount up to the future prosperity and greatness of this favored land.

#### QUESTION ANSWERED.

If gold is so universally diffused through the mining country, and if the soil in the valleys is so fertile, and produce sells at so high a price,—why cannot every man who is prudent and industrious, soon acquire wealth in California?

Answer.—Although gold is quite generally diffused, yet there are comparatively but few places sufficiently rich to pay the expense of obtaining it. Whether the miner is earning anything or not, his expenses are always going on, and five hundred dollars per year, is

a moderate bill for a miner's board and expenses. A majority do not earn much to exceed that amount, and thousands even fall short of it, and in consequence are getting deeper in debt. I believe that one-half of the miners would return to their homes, if they had money to pay their passages.

As to farming, it requires some capital to make even a small beginning. Claims on good lands are high. A small outfit for a farmer would stand something as follows:—

Claim on forty acres of land,.....	\$400
Yoke of Oxen,.....	300
One Cow,.....	200
Plow, Drag, Chains, and other tools,.....	100
One Sow,.....	100
Twenty-five dunghill Fowls,.....	100
Seed, .....	200
<b>Total, .....</b>	<b>\$1,400</b>

To fence this field, might cost as much as all the foregoing bill, amounting in all, to nearly three thousand dollars. Such a capital would enable a man to commence farming upon a small scale. But how shall a man begin without capital at all?

In the mines it seems to be equally difficult to commence business to advantage without some capital. Without means to purchase stock, one cannot become a partner in any of the large Damming, Tunneling, Quartz-mining, or Water Companies. The only chance is at individual enterprise. By this mode, there are two ways in which to proceed. First, To work on wages for others. Secondly, To find diggings for one's

self. Wages are high, but employment fluctuating. A man frequently engages to labor for another at five dollars per day. Before the end of the week, the mine fails, and all the hands are discharged. What was earned here, must all be paid for board, before employment can again be found. Hence there is no certainty of acquiring capital by working for wages. The miner must then either find diggings of his own, or else purchase a claim supposed to be good, of some other person. A claim cannot be purchased for a sum much short of five hundred dollars, that holds out a tolerably fair prospect of yielding a return of five dollars for each day's labor. But when this amount of money has been paid, the claim in a majority of cases, proves to be good for nothing. Perhaps a deception had been practised by the seller. Gold dust has frequently been by men's hands, privately mixed with the earth, and then washed out while some person was present, by which means the claim obtains a high reputation for riches, and sells accordingly. This process the miners call "salting a claim." If the miner searches for diggings of his own, he may strike a fortune the first day, or he may toil faithfully for months and years, and all his labor prove totally unavailing.

The foregoing facts are a sufficient answer to the question,—why every man cannot gain wealth in California.

#### CAPRICIOUSNESS OF FORTUNE.

Fortune oftens dispenses her favors in the gold mines with a capricious hand. The experienced miner will sometimes toil in vain for years, while the new-comer,



just arrived and entirely ignorant of the trade, makes his fortune in a few days. An anecdote, illustrating this fact, has been told to me for a truth. The circumstance is affirmed to have taken place in the Southern mines :

Two small companies were mining on claims that lay adjoining each other. They had worked here a long time, neither party ever having made anything more than low wages. But having nothing better to set themselves about, concluded to work the ground entirely out, acting upon the principle that a "certainty" is better than an uncertainty. They had commenced at the outside lines, and as they drew near each other, could not agree as to the precise point where the division line dividing their claims should be drawn. A yankee, just arrived from "down East," and in search of "diggings," stopped a few minutes to make some enquiries of these two companies, an individual belonging to one of which proposed that the stranger should run the division line, he being of course disinterested. The stranger said if such was their wish, he would freely do the job. They told him to take a rope, and beginning at the outside corners, measure off a certain number of feet towards the center. This was soon accomplished, when it was found that a little stripe of four or five feet wide remained. This, the two companies gave to the yankee to pay him for his trouble in making the measurement. He commenced immediately on his little claim, and in two weeks took out nine thousand dollars, and started for home, while the original proprietors continued their researches up to the lines, but found nothing more favorable than before.

## SCIENTIFIC MINING.

Editors and others talk much on the wonderful results which they anticipate from the introduction of what they style "Scientific Mining;" but what has science to do with a game that depends on chance? Science is completely baffled in "prospecting" for gold. The deposits are found in situations where science would never think of searching. For a general rule, as far as scientific mining has been attempted in California, the result has been a great expenditure of money to little or no profit. Such has been the fate of nine-tenths of all the damming, tunneling, and quartz-mining operations. "Go it blind," is a cant phrase of California gamblers, and this is precisely the way in which the gold hunter must commence business. He must go it blind; that is, must go as chance directs, for there seems to be no other way in which to proceed.

## THE TRUTH HARD TO ASCERTAIN.

I have heard much fault found with California editors for publishing such wonderful accounts of the richness of the mines, and the splendid fortunes that have been so suddenly acquired. However, I have no doubt of the literal truth of most of these stories. I have myself witnessed things as extraordinary as anything they relate. The editors have indeed told the truth, but they have not told "the whole truth." They tell us of the thousands who have made fortunes; all this is correct, but they have not mentioned the tens of thousands who have scarcely made their living.—Although the newspapers have in general told the truth, yet by these very accounts, the public is wofully

deceived, and it will be still more so, should it come to the conclusion that a trip to the mines is a sure road to wealth, because crowds are returning with pockets full of money, and ship-loads of gold are weekly landed on our shores. Those who return, are in general the fortunate "few," and the ship-loads of dust have been scraped together by the sweat and toil of countless thousands.

#### EXPULSION OF FOREIGNERS.

All, and every other class of men except miners, are interested in keeping up the gold mania, so that crowds of adventurers will be constantly arriving. The following classes are particularly interested, namely,—Shippers, Steamship Companies, Steamboat owners, Editors, Merchants, Grocery and Hotel keepers, Actors, Jugglers, Fiddlers, Gamblers, Thieves and Robbers, Teamsters, Butchers, Drovers, and even Gardeners and Farmers. Such being the facts, you will see the great difficulty in discriminating the whole "truth" in reference to the far famed "El Dorado." The miners do not desire any addition to their numbers, but are glad to have as many leave as possible, and even talk strongly of expelling by force of arms, a part of the population from the mines, viz: the foreigners, commencing with the Chinese, as being the most numerous, as well as the class most easily managed. But to expel the foreigners, would in my opinion be unjust as well as impolitic, and contrary to the spirit of our Constitution, and the genius of American liberty. Let our country continue to be, as it ever has been, an asylum for the oppressed of all nations. Then will the stars and stripes be a beacon light, to guide the world to freedom.

## POLITICAL ECONOMY.

As far as the general and national wealth of our own country is concerned, it is of but very little importance who digs the gold. The precious metals when taken from the earth, soon go into the channels of commerce, and are paid out for products in the markets of the world. That nation will therefore obtain the most money, that has the greatest amount and variety of products, and the most extensive commerce. Spain once held nearly all the gold and silver mines known on the globe, for a period of three hundred years. But the precious metals only passed through Spanish hands, and were paid out for products, in England, France and Germany. These countries became rich, while Spain sunk in poverty and weakness.

An untrammelled commerce will do more towards enriching our country, than would a dozen Californias, dug only by the hands of American citizens. If, as has been suggested, the average product of labor is lower in California than it ranges in any other State in the Union, then certainly gold mining is an unprofitable investment of labor and capital, and cannot enrich the mass of those who engage in the business.

## SACRAMENTO RIVER.

The average width of the river, is about one-fourth of a mile, though at its entrance into the Bay it expands to more than a mile in breadth. Several splendid and swift running steamboats pass daily between the two principal cities, the distance being one hundred and thirty miles.

The stream runs a very serpentine course through the vast plain consisting of rich alluvial soil. The shores are generally covered with heavy oak timber for some distance back, but occasionally there are openings, or prairies, immediately on the bank, along which gardens and fields are scattered at different distances from each other. The appearance of the various crops, is a sufficient proof of the richness of the soil. Forty miles below Sacramento City, the river divides into two channels of nearly equal size, and passes on each side of an island fifteen or twenty miles in length. The boats pass through the western channel. Arriving at the mouth of the river, we pass through a succession of bays, three in number, connecting with each other by straits, or narrows. That nearest the ocean, is called the Bay of San Francisco. In passing through these bays in a pleasant day, no prospect can be more delightful than that which may be seen from the deck of the steamer. We have a very distinct view of the coast range of mountains, being near their bases. To the south, Mount Diablo lifts its lofty head against the clear blue sky, while to the south-west an amphitheater of green hills rise behind each other. Around the margin of the Bay, are dispersed many fine farms and country-seats, displaying a degree of rural elegance which we should scarce expect to find in so new a country.

Passing by the city and port of Benicia, and Vallejo, the State Capital, an hour or two running brings us within sight of a vast crowd of shipping, lying in front of San Francisco. Great numbers ride at their anchors far out in the Bay. Here are to be seen the huge



ocean steamers, while the constant arrival or departure of boats is announced by the loud whistling of steam along the wharves.

#### BAY AND CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO.

The Bay of San Francisco is sprinkled with small islands, rising very regularly from the water in the form of a turtle's back. They are destitute of vegetation, but look as though covered with guano, being the resort of innumerable gulls and other aquatic birds.

San Francisco is built at the foot of a number of sand hills, covered with a tangled growth of low shrubbery. These hills stretch far away to the south and west. Among them are many small valleys, which are improved as gardens, of extraordinary richness and beauty. In this city are many fine buildings, either of brick or stone, such as theaters, churches, hotels, &c. A considerable share of the city, at present, stands on artificial ground, (if it can be called ground,) built out into the Bay, and stretching two miles, or so, along the shore. The streets are built on piles driven in the mud, and supporting square timbers, which are covered with planks, like a continuous bridge, about ten feet higher than the surface of the water. The tide rolls beneath the town. When wind and tide unite their forces, the waves rush against the piles, causing whole streets to quiver like "a reed shaken by the wind."

This place is already one of the greatest ports of entry within the wide limits of our Republic.

## CHAPTER IX.

California Intelligence.—J. M. Horner, and his Farm.—Conflagration of Sacramento City.—Hydropathy—Dr. Bourne's Lecture.—Burning of the Steamship Independence.—Lassoing.—Steamboat Accident.—Col. E. D. Baker.—Capt. C. K. Garrison.

### CALIFORNIA INTELLIGENCE.

March 25th, 1853.—Arrived in San Francisco, and put up at the Commercial Hotel, to wait for a steamer to sail for San Juan del Sud. There are about an hundred boarders at the house, who, like myself, have started for home. The Commercial stands on Pacific Wharf. The boarders are from all parts of California. I have conversed with a great many of them, and their reports from all parts of the mining country are extremely discouraging. They affirm that miners have not, upon an average, made their board during the past Winter. This goes to confirm what I have before stated as the result of my own observation.

Some gentlemen among our boarders had been up to the head of Feather River. From these I learned some further particulars in relation to what is usually termed the Burning Mountain, and other curiosities around the sources of that long and turbulent stream, which takes its rise in the Sierra Nevada, and is a branch of the Sacramento, falling into that river one hundred and

twenty miles from its mouth. The Burning Mountain is not a volcano, but a heated mass of rocks and earth. Near the base are many perpendicular holes, into which if you drop a stick of timber, it will soon be ejected, with such force as to send it into the air to the height of an hundred feet. There are also many fountains of boiling-hot water, which, like the great Geysers, near Mount Hecla, in Iceland, periodically throw jets of water to the height of twenty feet, with a noise that can be heard at the distance of three or four miles. Not far from the foot of the mountain is a lake, or pond, of four or five acres; the water in it is hot, and continually boils like a chaldron in a heated arch. A brook of very cold water runs into this boiling lake.

In the vicinity, is the Sand Mountain, the base being about five miles by three, and as steep as sand can be made to lie. The whole mountain seems to consist of dry sand. There is no appearance of vegetation upon any part of it. A man cannot ascend its sides.

In the same neighborhood is a fine valley, forty miles long, and ten wide, covered with timothy and clover grass, like an eastern meadow. This region is far from settlements, but droves of cattle have recently been sent there for the purpose of grazing. There are many similar valleys among the ranges of the Sierra Neyada.

April 3d.—Not succeeding in getting a passage by the steamer that sailed on the 1st instant, I wait until the 15th instant, and in the mean time have concluded to take a short tour to the agricultural district in the valley of San Jose, fifty miles distant from this city.

April 4th.—Embarked on board a small steamboat, for Union City. We ran about forty miles on the Bay,

and then entered a creek, which we ascended seven miles. The stream is difficult to navigate, on account of being so crooked. In the seven miles, we ran towards every point of the compass, winding our way through level, sandy land, covered with native clover. The prospect from the deck of the boat is delightful. On one side are the flashing waters of the Bay. Around us, a vast level lawn, dotted here and there with country-houses, painted white, while in the back-ground rises an amphitheater of hills of the most vivid green, forming a semi-circle around the Bay. Union City is a small place at the head of navigation on the creek. Here I landed, and walked seven miles up the valley. Each way from the road, are continuous fields of grain, or potatoes, and other crops, growing with rank luxuriance. In this valley are produced those vegetables of unusual size, with which the markets of the country are supplied, and which have been exhibited as specimens at the Agricultural State Fair.

#### J. M. HORNER, AND HIS FARM.

April 5th.—Sunday.—Passing a school-house, I perceived a gathering for a meeting, and went in. It proved to be a Mormon meeting, a few of that sect having located in this neighborhood. At the close of the exercises, was introduced to John M. Horner, a Mormon, and one of the greatest farmers in the State. This gentleman seems to possess a very respectable character and disposition, and is a remarkable instance of the sudden acquisition of wealth. He settled in this valley a little previous to the gold discovery, and has made his property by agricultural pursuits. He now

owns seventeen thousand acres of the finest land on earth, the value of which can hardly be estimated. He has at present four thousand acres in crops, six hundred of which are wheat, which here generally yields nearly eighty bushels per acre. The rest of his ground is occupied with barley, potatoes, turnips, cabbages, onions, and other vegetables. He owns the steamboat on which I came up to Union City, besides a line of stages running in the valley. The steamboat is principally employed in carrying Mr. Horner's produce to San Francisco. Around his fields, he has constructed twenty or more miles of iron and wire fencing. At this gentleman's invitation, I stopped four days at his hospitable mansion. Had he been aware of my opposition to Mormonism, I might not have been so freely entertained. But perhaps this would have made no difference with him. I think, however, he is not very dogmatic, and as to the doctrines or practices of the sect to which he belongs, says nothing. He is now but thirty-three years old, and has a wife and three small children. In the wide world there are few who have been as fortunate as this man, in the acquisition of wealth, and fewer still the number of those who are as liberal as he is in the use they make of it. He has many laborers in his employ, by which hundreds live—or upon his bounty. Mr. Horner's house stands near the center of the valley, which is ten or fifteen miles wide. A lovely brook runs near the building, and falls into a small lake nearly a mile distant. Upon and around this sheet of water, swarm endless numbers of wild geese and ducks. When startled by the crack of the hunter's rifle, they rise in dense clouds and fill



the surrounding atmosphere with the clack of their clamorous voices. Hundreds are killed daily, and sent to the city markets, all of them being as fat as any epicure would desire. In a state of nature, this valley is covered with clover, and the low mountains on each side of it with oats. The landscape is diversified with a profusion of flowers, exhibiting rare forms of beauty, as well as the most brilliant coloring. Mr. Horner has already a large tract covered with orcharding and vineyards. He is also erecting a flouring-mill, propelled by steam, and having nine sets of Burrs. A railroad is in contemplation, running the entire length of this valley to Monterey. This is a spot where Heaven has scattered blessings with a profuse hand. An eternal verdure reigns, and in reference to vegetables, Autumn may be said to last through the year. Winter might, with propriety, be here struck from the catalogue of the seasons. This valley is about an hundred miles in length, and extends from the Bay to near Monterey, on the sea coast.

#### CONFLAGRATION OF SACRAMENTO CITY.

April 8th.—Returned, by stage and steamboat, to the city, and found it crowded with the same busy and idle multitude. A strange fatality has attended all the cities in California. Most of them have been laid in ashes by fire, once at least. This place has suffered three general conflagrations, during the past four years. Sacramento was totally destroyed by fire, on the night of the second of November, 1852. I happened to be in that place at the time of the fire. It was a sublime and terrific spectacle. For the sake of those who have

never witnessed such a scene, I will attempt a brief description :

The polls of the Presidential election closed at sunset, and the dread cry of Fire! began to resound at eleven o'clock, the same evening. I had just retired to rest, at the National Hotel, one mile from the spot where the fire broke out. On hearing the startling cry, myself and all the boarders rushed into the street and saw an immense flame, mingled with very black smoke, rising from the most crowded part of the city, and near the river. At the engine-house the fire-bell was ringing with violence. An innumerable multitude already filled the streets. Women, leading their children, were hurrying along the sidewalks, and fleeing before the advancing fire, which in a few moments became an ocean of flame, before whose angry surges whole squares of the most splendid edifices vanished like the baseless fabric of a vision. Thousands of men were running with back-loads of their most valuable effects. Carts and vehicles of every kind were soon in rapid motion, driving furiously with loud rattling wheels, and loaded with every species of light merchandise. No attempt could be made to save provisions, groceries, or any heavy article. These all sank in promiscuous destruction. It was an appalling as well as stirring scene. There was a mighty uproar of mingled sounds. There was a constant crash of falling walls, mingled with incessant explosions of gunpowder, as the fire reached the canisters in the stores, and the conflagration of vast magazines of alcohol, sending up a peculiar and dismal illumination. At the same time, the loud voices of a countless host, accompanied the steady roar of this vol-

canic tempest. The wind blew with extreme violence. Large masses of blazing combustibles were taken up by flaming tornadoes and carried to a distance, setting new fires and urging forward the work of ruin. The fire companies were prompt to act, but their efforts were powerless. Hook and ladder companies rent houses into fragments, but all in vain. Buildings were blown up with barrels of powder, to arrest the progress of the flames. Every exertion proved entirely unavailing. The fiery deluge rolled on, as though nothing opposed its course, and in three hours this fine city lay in heaps of smoking embers. Several lives were lost, and the property consumed amounted in value to ten millions of dollars. The ground swept by the fire, and which was mostly covered with buildings, was about one mile in length, by half that in breadth.

Since the fire, the city has been twice swept with floods. But strange as it may appear, the city is rebuilt, and flourishing. Neither fire nor flood can arrest the progress of a California town. Such is the supernatural spirit of enterprise inspired by gold.

#### HYDROPATHY—DR. BOURNE'S LECTURE.

April 10th.—At four o'clock, P. M., a report arrived that the steamship S. S. Lewis had grounded outside the "Heads," fifteen miles from the city. She had four hundred passengers from San Juan del Sud.

In the evening I attended a lecture in Armory Hall, given by Dr. Bourne, a Hydropathist, or Cold Water Physician. He was an eloquent speaker, and was repeatedly cheered by the audience. I, of course, approved of his doctrine, having myself used but little

medicine besides water, for the past thirty years.—Water, diet, air, and exercise, constitute the chief part of my *Materia Medica*, and if every apothecary shop on the globe, together with their contents, had been in the midst of the Sacramento fire, it would have been no particular loss to me. I have had some sickness, as well as others, but I do not resort to drugs, mineral or vegetable, but to prescriptions drawn from my "*Materia Medica*." If we would cure our diseases, we must follow Nature, and obey her instructions. The beasts of the field do this, and therefore take the safest course. When a brute is sick, he abstains from food until nature requires it, and will not swallow drugs of any kind, unless compelled by absolute force. Let us study physic in the great Book of Nature, rather than pore over the pages of those ponderous volumes, beneath the weight of which the shelves of some medical libraries groan.

#### BURNING OF THE STEAMSHIP INDEPENDENCE.

April 11th.—The passengers of the S. S. Lewis arrived in town all safe, and reported the vessel a total loss. The steamer Goliah went from this harbor, for the relief of the passengers and crew.

Several California steamships have been lost on this coast within a few months, viz:—the Independence, the S. S. Lewis, &c. The wreck of the Independence was a frightful calamity. She belonged to the Vanderbilt line, and was run upon the rocks near Margareta Island, which is in the Pacific Ocean, one hundred and fifty miles west of Cape St. Lucas. The ship took fire soon after striking the rocks, leaving the passengers in a most appalling situation. One hundred

and fifty men, women and children, were either burnt to death, or drowned. Some succeeded in swimming forty rods through a tremendous surf, to the shore. Others floated on fragments of the ship. The rest had to make the hard choice between leaping into the sea and drowning, and remaining on the ship, and perishing in the flames. Most of them chose the former, and plunging into the waves, sunk to rise no more. The wife and child of Mr. Ayers, were two of the passengers on board the Independence. Mr. Ayers is the keeper of the Commercial Hotel, where I now stop. Many of the surviving passengers have been here, and in my presence have told the bereaved husband the facts in relation to the fate of his wife and child. A rope, fastened to the bulwarks, hung down by the side of the ship. They saw Mrs. Ayers descending to the water on this rope, and calling in vain for assistance. With her child in her arms, she clung a long time to the rope. At length the fire approached, her clothing was in a blaze, the rope burnt off, and she and her infant dropped into the raging flood, and were seen no more.

The passengers charge much blame to the account of the officers, or a part of them, for, after having safely landed from the boat, they did not return to attempt to save the passengers, because the sea was rough, and the undertaking would have been attended with some danger. Some incidents are affirmed to have taken place, that seem too black to put on paper. While the water was covered with hundreds of struggling, drowning wretches, and others, crowded upon one end of the burning ship stood dreading to take the fatal plunge,



their piercing cries were heard above the roaring of the sea. During this affecting and terrific scene, scores of dead bodies were thrown on shore by the waves. The pockets of the dead were instantly searched, and rifled by those who had themselves but just escaped a watery grave. The body of a woman was thrown upon the sand. Two men immediately stepped up, each claiming her as his wife, and seemed determined to take possession of her gold ornaments, and money. But while these were quarreling for the plunder over the corpse, the real partner of the deceased lady appeared, and proved, by the testimony of the passengers, the priority of his claim. But the tragedy cannot be told in words, and acts were performed quite too horrible to be related in these pages.

#### LASSOING.

April 12th.—Took a walk, a few miles back towards a beautiful villa called “The Mission.” On the way, saw a Mexican lassoing a wild ox, intended for the slaughter. The animal was caught by the rope, and captured without difficulty.

The dexterity with which a Mexican will throw the lasso, is quite surprising. These men alone are capable of capturing or driving the wild cattle and horses. The vaquero, (as these herdsmen are called,) being mounted on a swift courser, pursues the flying herd, swinging in his hand the fatal lasso, which is a rope twenty or thirty feet in length, having a slip-noose at one end. If the vaquero can get within fifteen or twenty feet of an animal, he throws the lasso, and seldom misses his aim. The affrighted creature finds his horns, neck, or feet, as

the case may be, encircled by the rope. The horseman now changes his course, giving spur to his horse; the sudden jerk generally throws the captive animal sprawling on the ground, from which position he quickly rises snorting, bellowing, rearing and plunging, in a most furious manner. But his desperate efforts to regain his liberty, are all in vain. He soon exhausts himself by his ineffectual struggles. He is a slave for life, and must now submit to wear the yoke of bondage.

Bears, deer, elk and antelope are frequently taken in the same manner. And it is said that some of the Mexicans will lasso wild geese and ducks, and even birds, upon the wing. But these last exploits I have never witnessed. Mexican robbers use this rope with terrible effect upon travelers, many of whom, since my residence in California, have been in this way dragged from the road into some adjacent wood, murdered and robbed.

#### STEAMBOAT ACCIDENT.

At six o'clock, P. M., this day, the news reached here of another steamboat disaster. The packet, Jenny Lind, burst her boiler at noon, on her way from here to Alviso, forty miles up the Bay. The passengers were eight ladies, and one hundred and fifty men. Thirty are dead, and forty scalded, and some in their fright leaped overboard and were drowned. All the ladies were instantly killed. The head of the boiler was burst out precisely in the direction of the dining saloon, just as the company had seated themselves at the table. These catastrophes follow each other in such quick succession, that the public are struck with consternation.

April 13th.—I have just been down to the steamboat Union, which arrived during the night, with the killed and wounded, and the surviving passengers and crew of the Jenny Lind. The deck and floor of the cabin were covered with the dead and dying, a melancholy spectacle. This calamity is considered as purely accidental; I hear no blame attached to the officers. If steam cannot be used with greater safety, it is time for caloric, or some other motive power, to be put in requisition.

COLONEL E. D. BAKER.

I called on Colonel E. D. Baker, a gentleman whose kindness to myself will not be forgotten while life and memory endure. Colonel Baker is one whom the people of my own Prairie State of Illinois have delighted to honor, and by whom he has twice been elected to that exalted station, a seat in the Congress of the United States. He was also one of the heroes of Cerro Gordo, and Mexico, and commanded the fourth Regiment of Illinois volunteers. The Colonel's character is a full confirmation of the adage, viz:—"The brave are always generous." Multitudes can testify, from experience, to the liberality of Colonel Baker. He is also a lawyer, whose eloquence at the Bar is not surpassed. He and his amiable family reside at present in a beautiful cottage, standing upon an eminence in the rear of the city, above the dust and smoke of the bustling town, and overlooking the picturesque Bay of San Francisco. Long may they live, and enjoy that felicity they so richly merit.

## CAPTAIN C. K. GARRISON.

I am also under immense obligations of gratitude to Captain C. K. Garrison, chief agent of the Nicaragua line of Ocean Steamers. His urbanity of manners, talent, and enterprise, are well known to the tens of thousands who have been wafted in safety along the pathless deep, in the splendid floating palaces whose movements he directs. May glory, peace and prosperity attend his earthly career.

## CHAPTER X.

Embarkation for Home.—Entrance of the Bay.—Fine Weather.—Description of the Ship.—Killing Time.—Eating Arrangements.—Latitude—Size of our Globe.—Buckley's Serenaders.—An Evening Lecture.—Preaching by a Bishop.—The Coast of Mexico in sight.—Ocean Insects—Lecture—Whales.—Meeting two Steamships.—Volcanoes in Eruption—Lecture.—Skipjack Fish—Acapulco.—Luminous Water—Lecture.—Wonders of Steam—Fixed Stars.—Central America—Volcanic Mountains.—Appearance of the Coast—Rainbow.—Arrival at Port.

### EMBARKATION FOR HOME.

April 16th.—At four o'clock, P. M., I went on board the steamship Brother Jonathan, bound for San Juan del Sud, in Central America. The number of passengers on board was five hundred and sixty-four. The main and promenade decks were crowded with this host of returning Californians, while thousands on thousands thronged the Pacific Wharf to witness our departure. The steam had been generating for two hours, hawsers were now unfastened and taken in, the ponderous wheels began to roll, and the stately ship shot into the Bay, amidst the shouts of the passengers, responsive to the cheers of the thousands on the shore. After moving a short distance, the steamer gave her farewell salute from a piece of brass artillery. We now



stood off into the Bay, passing through a crowd of ships lying at anchor. We now expected to proceed immediately to sea, but in this were disappointed. The steamer moved majestically around a large circle in the Bay, and came to anchor opposite the west end of the city, where we lay by until the next morning, waiting for her papers to be sent out from the shore. About sun-set, the sky began to lower, and soon dark masses of clouds rolled up from the ocean. A storm of rain commenced, which continued through the night, accompanied by a gale of wind. But our ship remained at rest, being firmly held by a heavy anchor with a chain cable. This being the first voyage, in reference to most of us, we were glad that our ship lay by, greatly preferring a good harbor, to being tossed on the wide ocean in a dark and stormy night.

#### ENTRANCE OF THE BAY.

April 17th.—At break of day, several small boats came out from the shore, the papers from the Custom-House arrived, the steam was raised, the anchor weighed, the pilot on board, and about sun-rise we moved down the Bay, and soon found ourselves passing through the Narrows which connect the Bay with the Pacific Ocean. The entrance to the harbor is grand and beautiful. On the left hand is an amphitheater of hills, covered with verdure; on the right, are six green promontories, or points of land projecting from higher ground on that side. Around the entrance are numerous small islands, or rocks, lifting their moss-grown heads above the water, and beat by the eternal surges of an ocean ten thousand miles wide.

San Francisco harbor is one of the finest in the world, being entirely land-locked by surrounding hills and mountains, and of sufficient capacity to give shelter to all the fleets of the globe.

Immediately upon passing the Narrows, we found the sea in considerable commotion, having been raised in heavy swells by the wind during the past night. The ship began to plunge in such a manner that fresh-water sailors, like myself, found it quite difficult to maintain our standing. The passengers began to be seized with sea-sickness, and in a few hours, hundreds were down, and the noise of vomiting resounded from all parts of the vessel. This seemed to be making a bad commencement to our voyage. As to myself, I was not much affected with this sickness. I had eaten sparingly for two days, and I now took to my berth, where I remained a large portion of the time for the next twenty-four hours. Passing the Narrows, and over the bar without striking, the pilot was dismissed, and returned in his own boat. We were now beyond all the head-lands, and Islands, in the main ocean, whitened with foam, the ship being alternately lifted upon the summit of the swells, and then plunged into the valleys between them. To witness the sublime movements of the ocean waves, was to me a novel and interesting spectacle. The day wore slowly away, and the sun at length sunk in a wide world of waters. The swells rather increased in size as night set in, and there was no abatement of sickness among the passengers. During the day the sea has several times broken over the bow, pouring a large body of water upon the main forward deck, and drenching a number of the steerage

passengers. There was not the least apprehension of danger, and as to myself, I only slept the sounder, being rocked by the billows.

#### FINE WEATHER.

April 18th.—The swells begin to subside, the sickness to abate, and the ship plows her way through the waves, leaving behind a lengthy wake of white foam mingled with the deep green of the sea. We saw two whales at the distance of a mile, spouting and plunging among the waves. We also passed several shoals of porpoises. Their motions are peculiar; perpetually rising and falling, appearing and disappearing at short intervals. At sunset, we are thirty miles from the coast, but birds are skimming the water around us. The weather is delightful, and in the evening, an unclouded moon pours her floods of silver light upon the vast expanse of the dancing, sparkling waters. Hundreds of gentlemen and ladies are walking the promenade deck, enjoying the splendid scenery of a moonlight night at sea. The passengers are becoming more lively, as the sea becomes more calm. At sunset, land is still visible at a great distance, and apparently but just rising from out the watery plain.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE SHIP.

April 19th.—A fog in the morning, which clears away about ten o'clock, and the weather is pleasant as could be desired. The sails are set, and there is a light breeze just sufficient to fill the sails, which steadies the motion of the ship, and adds a mere trifle to her velocity. The Brother Jonathan is fifteen hundred tons burthen,

two hundred and forty feet in length, and has a single low-pressure engine of four hundred horse-power. She has berths for five hundred passengers. The saloon is below the main deck, towards the stern, and is about eighty feet in length by twenty feet in width, surrounded by state rooms having doors of pannel work, ornamented with gildings. When fully illuminated in the evening with all its glittering ornaments, it might fairly vie in splendor with the drawing-room of an imperial palace. In this sumptuous apartment, tables are set, at which the cabin passengers take their meals. The viands are of corresponding richness and variety.—The floor is covered with oil-cloth carpeting of bright and variegated colors. The seats consist of chairs and settees with crimson cushions. Instead of the uncomfortable mode of voyaging in former times, the traveler can now sit, read, or write at his ease, living in a parlor, at the same time moving along the pathless deep at the rate of from two to three hundred miles per day. For these accommodations, we are indebted to the towering genius of a Fulton. To keep up the supply of fresh meat, we have on board eight or ten beef cattle, a number of swine, besides a small lot of sheep. These are slaughtered when needed. We have a plenty of potatoes, both sweet and of the common kind. Onions, lettuce, &c., fresh as if just brought from the garden. Fish, fresh and salt, crabs and lobsters, fresh veal and mutton preserved in cans, geese and ducks, and other fowls kept in ice, and dried fruits and nuts are on the table at every meal. The improved diet on board of modern ships, has banished all fear of the terrible scurvy, which in former years used to make such havoc among

those who ventured to take long voyages. Thus, as the arts and sciences are cultivated, the happiness of mankind is advanced.

April 20th.—The sea is almost as smooth as a mill-pond, and the ship, with steam, aided by a little wind, glides along with a steady, rapid motion. We have entirely lost sight of the land, and the sun rises from the water and sets in the same. We have now gained a distance of seven hundred miles from San Francisco, and are off the coast of Old California, in Mexico.

April 21st.—The sun rises clear, and the coast of Old California is visible. By the aid of a spy-glass, I could discern the summits of three mountains of considerable elevation, standing a little back of the coast. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of paying a well merited compliment to Captain Baldwin, and the officers of this ship. Captain Baldwin is an officer in the United States Navy, a skillful navigator, and one who administers the government of the ship in a manner perfectly systematic, whilst his urbanity of manners gives entire satisfaction, both to the crew and all the passengers. It is unnecessary to particularise, for all the officers are vigilant in the performance of their various and responsible duties. In this ship there is one omission that I regret; there is no daily bulletin posted by the captain, giving our latitude and longitude, so that we cannot tell where we are, unless by enquiring of the captain.

#### KILLING TIME.

Various expedients are resorted to by the passengers to “kill time,” and “while away” the monotony of the hours. Many, before leaving San Francisco, provided



themselves with packages of newspapers, and tales. With these they amuse themselves a part of the day. Others, by puffing segars, contrive to send off several hours each day in clouds of smoke. Others, again, assemble round the bar, and indulge in a glass of cider, beer, wine, or brandy, cooled with a lump of ice. Here and there you see crowds collected, discussing grave political questions with considerable zeal, and some talent. The points most frequently debated in these juntos, are free trade and abolitionism. But if you take a look after supper into the grand saloon, you would soon be convinced that the company assembled there, consisted of those who had been in California. You might there see scores of well dressed gentlemen and ladies seated at two long tables, and by listening a moment might hear certain expressions, which, however, are mere technical terms, and much better understood in California than in any other country; such for instance as "euchre," "right and left bower," and now and then, "high, low, jack, and the game." This jargon, although a very barbarous dialect, would enable you to "guess" the nature and importance of the business going on. All this of course is mere amusement, and I know not of any gambling in the saloon, though I think there is enough of it done in the steerage.

The evening is fine. Light and fleecy clouds are moving along, through which the Queen of Night shows her mild and cheerful countenance. There is something of a sea running, but as the ship plows the waves at right angles, there is but little rolling or plunging.

## EATING ARRANGEMENTS.

April 22nd.—There was a fog during the latter part of the night, which lifted itself from the sea about sunrise, and we obtained a faint and indistinct view of the land, but lost sight of it an hour or two afterwards. I suppose we are a little north of Cape St. Lucas, the southern extremity of Old California. The weather is very clear, the wind brisk and fair, and the Steamer plows the waves in magnificent style.

The first and second cabin passengers, are furnished with "meal tickets." The first are white, and the second green. Those having the white tickets, eat at the first table during one day, whilst those having the green, take precedence the next. Thus the order of eating is alternately changed. The second cabin passengers fare as well as those belonging to the first, but are not like them, provided with state-rooms. That is all the distinction, but the difference in price is seventy-five dollars. Eating is the main business on board of a Steamship, and to pass away time, it is customary to sit long at the table.

## LATITUDE—SIZE OF OUR GLOBE.

By enquiry of the Captain, I learned that our place at noon is directly under the tropic of Cancer, in twenty-three degrees thirty minutes North latitude, eighty miles in a westerly course from Cape St. Lucas. The weather is becoming very warm, and the sea very smooth. A little after sunset, the full moon arose. The wind ceased and there was a perfect calm. The air felt like the softest breath of Summer, and a more delightful evening I never witnessed, either on land or water. I

observe that the North Star is nightly sinking towards the level of the sea. In the mean time, the sun and moon have attained a higher elevation in the heavens, and when in their meridian, are almost directly over our heads. Thus we have daily and nightly proofs before us of the rotundity of our earth. We have tangible evidence also, that our world is a body of diminutive size. By counting the degrees of latitude and longitude between us and San Francisco, I find we have in six days travelled a twenty-third part of the distance around our globe. The foregoing facts are known theoretically by every person having a smattering of geography and astronomy, but their truth is more fully realised when thus reduced to practice, and confirmed by ocular demonstration.

#### BUCKLEY'S SERENADERS.

I find that we have on board the ship a band of eight or ten musicians, styled "Buckley's New Orleans Serenaders." They have various instruments, which they accompany with their voices. Their performance consists of negro melodies and songs. Their imitations are perfect, and their exhibitions have attracted great crowds in all parts of California. I suppose they have made their "piles" and are now returning home. They have already given us one volunteer concert, and we expect they will entertain us with another.

April 23d.—Saturday.—The weather is pleasant, and still grows warmer. We are now passing across the Gulf of California, towards the Coast of Mexico, distant in the direction we are proceeding, four hundred miles. At noon, our latitude is twenty degrees forty-two min-

utes North, and we are about one hundred and fifty miles from land in any direction.

#### AN EVENING LECTURE.

From the time we embarked, until we crossed the tropic of Cancer, the weather was rather cool, but here the temperature seemed to change suddenly, and we found ourselves in a warm current of air, and we began to feel the climate of the torrid zone. The sails are now all furled, and we proceed by the aid of steam alone. The moon being near the full, the sea smooth, the company in high spirits, and by request of passengers, I gave a lecture on Astronomy to a great crowd assembled on the promenade deck. The subject seemed to be suited to the occasion. Around us was the sublime spectacle of a boundless ocean, our canopy was the star-paved vault of heaven, and the pale, yet lovely Queen of night in peerless majesty, presided over the scene. It was but natural under such circumstances, to extend our thoughts to that host of innumerable worlds, which were the only objects visible, except the little bark upon which we are floating along the bottomless abyss.

#### PREACHING BY A BISHOP.

April 24th —Sunday.—This morning, I for the first time saw numerous flying fish flitting from the summit of one wave to another. The wind freshens, the sails are again set, and we rush through the briny flood with great velocity.

. Bishop Ames, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, preached at half-past ten o'clock in the morning. He

gave an eloquent discourse upon the general effect produced in the world by the introduction of Christianity, such as ameliorating the miseries of war, diffusing a knowledge of the arts and sciences, liberalising the civil governments of the world, &c. I think however, the Bishop gave credit to the Protestant Reformation for some improvements, the honor of which more properly belongs to the invention of the mariner's Compass, the art of Printing, and the discovery of the true solar system, and the motion and figure of the Earth. When Christianity was introduced throughout the Roman Empire, and established by authority of the emperor Constantine, then what little moral and intellectual light there was in the world was extinguished, the dark ages came on, and ignorance and superstition, like a black impenetrable cloud, overspread all the christian world. But when the art of printing and the compass were invented, and Copernicus proclaimed the true system of astronomy, the shadows began to break away. Had it not been for these inventions and discoveries, the nations would have remained in ignorance, notwithstanding the reformations of Luther and Calvin; and the thrones of all despots might, for what we can see, have stood as firm as ever; and indeed, they stand even now in Protestant as well as in Greek and Catholic countries.

A ship under full sail going North, is in sight at noon, the first we have seen upon this voyage. During the last twenty-four hours, we have moved two hundred and eighty-five English miles.

#### THE COAST OF MEXICO IN SIGHT.

April 25th.—The high mountainous coast of Mexico is in very plain sight, and distant only ten or fifteen



miles. We can see a great extent of country. It appears like a vast amphitheater, the most distant range towering high in the heavens.

OCEAN INSECTS—LECTURE—WHALES.

The weather is like August in the States, and during the last night, scores of passengers deserted their berths below, and slept upon their blankets in the open air upon the promenade deck. There is scarcely a ripple upon the water. Looking over the bulwarks this morning, we perceived the sea crowded with countless millions of creatures of a light color, resembling worms three or four inches in length, and of the size of a man's finger, having large heads, somewhat after the fashion of wrigglers in stagnant fresh water. I think these animals are called squids. The ship plowed through this living mass for several miles. These creatures are the food of whales, and the places of their resort are termed by the sailors, "the whale's pastures."

I gave another lecture in the evening upon Sacred History. We had a large number of singers, whose melodious strains awoke the echoes of the still and listening deep. This ocean seems as far as our experience goes, quite worthy of its name "Pacific," that is, peaceful. Poets sing of the restless "billows," but here at present they seem to slumber in profound tranquility. Our ship is kept in a state perfectly neat and clean. Every morning the carpeted rooms are all swept, after which the pump is set in motion, and floods of water poured over the decks, which are then scrubbed and swabbed. Thus, care is taken to preserve health on board. Numerous flying fish are flitting about us.

They appear to be about twelve inches in length, and make use of their large fins for wings. Two whales showed themselves. One came quite near, and exhibited his huge length as he shot across the ship's foaming path, about eighty rods astern.

#### MEETING TWO STEAMSHIPS.

Latitude seventeen degrees sixteen minutes North. Quite an excitement on board at three o'clock P. M., and the passengers are all on deck with glasses and eyes looking ahead at a splendid Steamship, the Cortes, which is rapidly nearing us in majestic style. The white foam dashes from her prow. When within half a mile, our wheels were stopped, and as the Cortes came abreast of us, we ran up our colors and saluted them with a discharge of artillery. They returned the compliment, and also stopped their wheels. A boat was sent to her from our ship to exchange letters and newspapers. There seemed to be an immense multitude of people on board of the Cortes. Some judged the number at one thousand, bound to the gold region. They will soon learn that "all is not gold that shines," and that distance lent an enchantment to the scene, which a nearer view will dissipate. In a few minutes, both ships were under way again, and we soon lost sight of the beautiful Cortes, she appearing to sink beneath the unruffled surface of the sea. We were at this time only eight or ten miles from the mountainous coast. An hour after this, and another ship hove in sight. She was soon abreast of us, and passed without stopping. She proved to be the Steamship Panama from Panama. Her decks were covered with a dense throng of gold seekers.

We raised our ensign and saluted with a gun, and the passengers on both ships saluted each other with loud and reiterated cheers. These incidents served to enliven us a little, and break for the moment the dull monotony of the voyage.

#### VOLCANOES IN ERUPTION—LECTURE.

We are now so near the coast, that we can see with the naked eye the rock-bound shore, and the precipices on the sides of the mountains. The land scenery along here is truly sublime. Successive chains of mountains rise behind each other, presenting a great number of sharp peaks and conical summits, their forms denoting their volcanic character. After dark, the lurid fires of volcanoes were seen gleaming through the dusky atmosphere.

I tried to do my part towards entertaining the passengers, and in the evening gave a lecture upon the scenery of Salt Lake Valley, and an exposition of Mormonism.

#### SKIPJACK FISH—ACAPULCO.

April 26th.—We had great sport this morning in looking at an immense shoal of Skipjack fish. The water seemed alive with them for the space of a square league. They appeared to be two or three feet in length, and were perpetually leaping entirely out of the water. Hundreds were in the air at a time. Some were so active, and came up with such an impetus, as to shoot up to the height of eight or ten feet above the surface, when turning a graceful curve, would plunge in again. At ten in the morning, neared the coast, and

perceived numerous small islands stretching along the shore. North latitude at noon, fifteen degrees twenty minutes, and West longitude ninety-seven degrees twenty-eight minutes.

We have passed Acapulco, and I regret that our ship did not touch at that old Spanish city. It is said to be a very interesting place. The harbor is entered by a deep and narrow channel, which expands into a large circular bay, surrounded by mountains. Here we might have seen the orange groves and other fruit-bearing trees of the torrid zone. In the regions around Acapulco are numerous volcanoes, and the place has sometimes been desolated by earthquakes. A few years since there happened a tremendous earthquake, the effects of which are still visible on all sides. Such was the violence of the shock, and the commotion of the sea, that ships were thrown entirely out of the water, and now lie rotting far up the sides of the hills.

#### LUMINOUS WATER—LECTURE.

The moon rises late this evening, which enables me for the first time, to observe a phenomenon generally seen at sea. The foaming tide occasioned by the wheels and wake of the ship, seemed perfectly illuminated by means of what appeared like coals of fire, or sparkling diamonds. These fiery appearances are doubtless of a phosphorescent nature.

This evening we can see the dark red fires of a volcano. I gave another lecture, the subject being the Comets, and the planet Saturn, with his satellites and rings.

## WONDERS OF STEAM—FIXED STARS.

April 27th.—At break of day, a long black cloud hung over the gulf of Tehuantepec, which we are now crossing. There were frequent gleams of lightning which seemed to lift up the lower margin of the cloud, giving a distinct view of a broad expanse of the ocean. By the mighty power of steam, we are able almost to outstrip the speed of the storm. A shower threatened to fall on us this morning, which would doubtless have occurred, had not the ship, while the cloud was slowly rising, moved many miles ahead, by which means, we seemed to pass by the southern end of the shower. No land in sight.

North latitude at noon, fourteen degrees, sixteen minutes. The sun is now directly over head, and pours his vertical beams upon us with great power. The sea-water is very warm, so also is the fresh water kept in large iron tanks on board the ship. Cabin passengers are allowed ice water to drink, an accomodation in which those in the steerage do not participate. Many whales are plunging around, and playing their mighty gambols.

I gave a Lecture in the evening upon the subject of the fixed stars and nebular system, demonstrating by analogical reasoning, the very probable fact, that there is a grand center of motion and gravity to the material universe; this center consisting of a vast body of matter, superior in heft to the millions of suns, and hundreds of millions of worlds, which compose Jehovah's Empire, of which this mighty center is the Capital.

## CENTRAL AMERICA—VOLCANIC MOUNTAINS.

April 28th.—We have crossed the gulf of Tehuantepec three hundred miles broad, and at sunrise are within



twenty or thirty miles of Central America. It presents the most splendid piece of mountain scenery we have witnessed upon this voyage. To the north-east, we have a distinct view of sixteen immense volcanic summits, lifting their pointed summits high above the clouds, all of them being as to shape, beautiful and regular cones. They are volcanoes, or of volcanic origin, but not at present in a state of eruption. North latitude, thirteen degrees twenty-two minutes. Lost sight of land in the afternoon.

#### APPEARANCE OF THE COAST—RAINBOW.

April 29th.—A brisk breeze, the sails are all set, and we plunge through the waves with a regular and steady motion. At sunrise, a long line of the coast of Central America hove in sight, and I counted twenty volcanic peaks at a single observation. The passengers are in high spirits, as we expect to reach our port in the course of the day. We have had an unusually pleasant voyage, but a trifling amount of sickness, and but one serious accident has occurred; a man was badly hurt by falling down the forward cabin stairs.

#### ARRIVAL AT PORT.

The breeze freshens and the sea is covered with foam, but the swells are short and do not much impede the motion of the ship. The log has just been thrown, and our velocity is eleven English miles per hour. At twelve o'clock at noon, we are abreast of two immense volcanic mountains which seem to rise from an elevated plain or table land, as level as a planed board. Further south, no mountains are visible, and the coast looks

low and flat. A little further on in the same direction, the country for twenty miles or so, rises into a high smooth swell, rounding over from North to South, At the southern terminus of this swell, is a large volcanic mountain, the summit of which is flattened.

This forenoon, a sea turtle swam past near the ship. The weather is intensely hot, and the beams of a vertical sun are reflected from the deck covered with oil-cloth like blasts from the mouth of a furnace. It would scarce be supportable were it not for the strong breeze. We passed through another shoal of porpoises. They appear to be a fish six or eight feet in length, and are perpetually leaping from the water. When they appear, as on this occasion, in vast numbers, their gambols are quite amusing.

This afternoon we move sixty or seventy miles along the coast, so near to it that the groves appear very distinctly. It is a timbered country, and we see no signs of inhabitants. There seems to be a range of hills not far from the shore, while far back in the interior, we see the summits of three volcanoes with peaks concealed by clouds of smoke. The shore itself consists of perpendicular rocks, against which the surf rolls with great violence. While viewing these interesting objects, as if to add to the sublimity of the scene, a resplendent rainbow suddenly spanned the heavens over, the ends resting on the foaming water, while our ship was moving directly towards the centre of the arch. It was a triumphal arch, greatly surpassing in brilliancy and grandeur, the proudest that mortal hands have ever erected in honor of conquerors or kings. For the first time, we now see the land directly ahead. This is

a clear indication that we are near the end of the voyage. All the passengers are hurrying to and fro, picking up their goods, and arranging their baggage preparatory to landing.

The passengers have tendered a vote of thanks to Captain Baldwin and the officers and crew of the *Brother Jonathan*, for the polite attention they have paid to our wants, and the consummate skill they have evinced in managing all the concerns of the ship.

The sun is about one hour high,—the town is in sight, and the bustle on board is rapidly increasing. About sunset we entered the harbor, passing near a United States war ship lying at anchor. The wheels stopped, and soon we heard the heavy plunge of the anchor, and we were safely moored within eighty rods of the town. I cast my eyes about to take a hasty glance at the surrounding prospect.

## CHAPTER XI.

Town and Bay of San Juan Del Sud.—Landing—Procession to Virgin's Bay.—Lake and Volcanoes.—Embarkation—Mountain on Fire.—Scenery of the Lake and River.—Descending the River.—Adventurers on a Sand-bar.—Central American Soldiers.—Greytown and the Bay.—Embark for New York.—Mixed Character of the Passengers.—Night Reflections—Fight of Bullies.—A Dream—Appearance of Land.—Lopez and Fillibusters—Havana.—Sleeping Room—Neptune's Ride—Wreckers.—Lighthouse on Florida Reef.—Philosophy of the Gulf Stream.—An Economist.—Result of Gold Discoveries.—Thunder Storm—Phenomenon.—Thieving on Board—Black-fish.—Storm off Cape Hatteras.—A Composant seen.—Arrangements of the Ship.—Entrance of New York Harbor.

### TOWN AND BAY OF SAN JUAN DEL SUD.

The bay of San Juan Del Sud, is a circular indentation of the coast, a mile or two in diameter. Two points of land form the entrance, consisting of perpendicular rocks an hundred feet or more in height. Their bases have been worn by the dashing of the waves into a variety of curious forms. Around the shore is a wide beach of sand, a few rods back of which rises a circular chain of hills of a rough and ragged appearance, and entirely covered over with a tangled growth of bushes, shrubs, and trees, peculiar to a tropical climate. The town consists of a dozen framed houses, tenanted by Americans or Europeans, and many dwellings of the

natives constructed of small poles, and thatched with leaves. The place is of little consequence except as a landing for the steam ships of this line. A crowd of natives stood on the beach, and fifteen or twenty small boats immediately put off for the purpose of taking passengers from the ship to the shore. The boatmen were clamorous to obtain a large number, as the Steam ship Company allows them one dollar for each passenger they may take. Hundreds were soon on terra firma, but many staid on board during the night, among whom was myself.

#### LANDING—PROCESSION TO VIRGIN'S BAY.

April 30th.—At break of day, a discharge of artillery broke our slumbers, when going out upon deck, I saw a fleet of boats coming out to the ship to take off the remaining passengers. I got into a boat with seventeen others. We run aground six or eight rods from the shore. Many took passage from the boat to the beach upon the naked backs of the tawny natives, but this "shanks horse" conveyance did not suit my fancy, and myself and several others stripped off our shoes and stockings, and leaped into the water, wading to the shore and cooling our burning feet. Before sunrise, an immense number of mules with pack-saddles and rope halters, began to pour in from the surrounding country. A thousand or so of these animals were soon on the ground, from which each passenger selected one on which to ride twelve miles to Virgin Bay, on lake Nicaragua. The Steam ship Company pay for the use of these mules. Our cavalcade began to move forward about eight o'clock in the morning, forming an irregular



procession several miles in length. We travelled on the route of the Macadamised road now in a process of construction. Upon this road, hundreds of natives are employed in digging or transporting stone. The natives were used as beasts of burden, and the stone was carried by them upon hand-barrows, consisting of two poles united by a bullock's hide. Along the sides of the road were groups of native women, boys, and girls, soliciting our custom in purchasing brandy, lemonade, and various kinds of tropical fruits. The whole distance is a wilderness, except one small patch cleared and planted to sugar-cane, at this time about six feet high. The forest consists of banyan, cocoanut, wild orange, and various other trees peculiar to this climate, and a great variety of wild plants which most of us had never had an opportunity of seeing before. Many trees were thickly covered over with the brightest yellow flowers, and some of the plants were of the most singular beauty. The road is hilly, but the hills are not high. A share of the distance we follow up the course of a small river, and then descend an inclined plane, to the lake. The weather was intensely hot, but a strong gale was blowing that made the heat supportable. It is now the dry season in Central America. I arrived at the shore of the lake at eleven o'clock in the morning, having the good fortune to get started near the head of the column. On the shore is the town of Virgin Bay, containing two or three hundred people, natives and Americans. The white men are either keepers of taverns, groceries and stores, or else in the service of the Steam ship Company. The town stands upon the inclined plane gently descending towards the water.

## LAKE AND VOLCANOES.

Lake Nicaragua is forty-five miles wide, and one hundred and forty in length. Around the town is a dense growth of banyan and other timber. There is a large island in the lake opposite to the town, upon which are two immense volcanic mountains. Their summits were hid in clouds of smoke, which I was told is always the case. The name of the northern mountain is Omeopateo.

## EMBARKATION—MOUNTAIN ON FIRE.

The steamboat destined to transport us across the Lake, lies about half a mile from the shore, and a boat crowded with our passengers is frequently going out to her from the wharf. At Virgin Bay, tropical fruits are cheap and abundant, and fresh from the garden and forest, consisting principally of cocoanuts, oranges, lemons, pine apples, bananas, &c. These were sold by Central American women and girls, who officiated at several long tables spread in the open air. The banyan is one of the most common of the forest trees around the lake. Shoots from the limbs grow downwards, and at length root in the ground, and in time become large trunks. Thus the tree continually extends itself on all sides. This tree, instead of the oak, might well be crowned the monarch of the woods.

The Nicaragua dyeing-wood is produced around this lake, and all plants grow with a vigor never witnessed in a Northern climate. The boat in which we pass from the shore to the steamer, is a large iron life-boat, having air-tight receptacles to keep it from sinking should it fill with water. The wind blew with violence,

and the swells rolled tremendously when I went out to the steamer at sunset. There was as many in the life-boat as could stand, and a sheet of water went over us at every surge. I, for one, was wet as a drowned rat. No injury was done, however, and a drenching with water in this hot weather was quite refreshing. The water in the lake is very pure, but warm, and if cooled with ice, no water would be better to drink. We all got safely on board, and the steamer weighed anchor at ten o'clock. On this boat we have a perfect jam, and scarcely room to stand or move. We passed along the coast of the island on which arise the two volcanic mountains. The southern one in the night we discovered, was in a state of eruption, pouring forth a torrent of liquid fire. The lava seemed to proceed from an opening five hundred feet below the summit of the cone, and following the course of a ravine, had run about half the distance from where it broke out to the base of the mountain. I was informed that no person had ever been at the top of either of these volcanoes. Their height is much greater than Vesuvius, and nearer that of Mount *Ætna* in the Island of Sicily, but I do not know their altitude, but judge of the same only from appearance.

#### SCENERY OF THE LAKE AND RIVER.

May 1st.—At break of day I awoke, having slept very well, although I lay on the open deck, and men were traveling over me through the night; but they were careful where they placed their footsteps. Upon looking out, I saw the broad lake around me. The wind had gone down, and the surface of the water was smooth

as the face of a mirror. Numerous islands were in sight, covered with the most beautiful trees of banyan, and of the palm kind. Around their borders were narrow belts of grass and low shrubbery, and the whole scene was picturesque and lovely beyond the power of description, and might well be mistaken for the Hesperian Isles, or some fairy lands. At eight o'clock in the morning, we anchored in front of San Carlos. It is a native town of forty or fifty large huts or houses thatched with leaves. We stop here to report at the Custom-House. Standing upon the shore at this place is a flag-staff, from which waves the colors of Central America. The device on this flag is quite appropriate, being the map of a large globe in the center of the banner. We moved on again at nine o'clock, and soon entered the San Juan river, the outlet of the lake. We are now to follow this stream downward until it discharges itself into the Caribbean Sea. The river is about eighty rods in width. The banks are low, and the adjacent lands flat and covered with the thickest possible growth of trees, shrubs and plants. The majestic banyan towers high above all the others. On all sides the woods resound with the chattering of birds. Parrots, and the most splendid parrakeets abound, and are hopping from branch to branch, while monkeys and other creatures of the ape tribe, seem to be the lords of the grove, whose diversified fruits, growing in wild luxuriance, furnish them with their proper food in unfailing abundance. The river is full of alligators and lizards. Various kinds of amphibious reptiles fill the air with their loud croakings, greeting our ears with the most uncouth as well as novel sounds. Several alligators swam past us near



the boat. A shower of bullets greeted their appearance, when they were glad to hide themselves beneath the waves. The river is low, and the boat on which we have crossed the lake, runs too deep to go down more than half the distance from San Carlos to the Castillo Rapids. We have met a small steamboat which has taken on board half the passengers, the rest wait to go the second load, among whom is myself. Our boat being fastened to a tree, we have leisure to look around and survey the wild and romantic scene. Near at hand are several small islands, containing several acres each. In their center, are groves of banyans and other lofty trees, while around their margins are canes, plantain, and palmetto trees, with leaves two or three feet wide, and eight or ten in length. All along the river, upon each side, is a dense, dark, and unbroken forest, whilst the spaces from the ground to the tops of the trees, are filled with immense creeping vines and climbing plants, the names of which are entirely unknown to me. These solitudes are tenanted by vast numbers of birds, many of which display the most resplendent plumage. Here is also the native abode of the tiger-leopard, and other ferocious beasts. The woods are so thick and tangled, as to render them almost impenetrable by man. I went on shore at this place, and followed a foot path back some distance from the river, and was more and more surprised at every step, at the rank luxuriance and variety of the vegetable productions. There is a tree having leaves resembling those of Indian corn, but twice the length and width. I am told it is a species of plantain. They are amazingly tall. One that is six inches in diameter, growing to the length of nearly an



hundred feet. The trunk is of a deep green, and smooth as though varnished. It has no limbs, but leaves only, and these are arranged in two perpendicular rows on opposite sides. They never stand erect, being so slender, their weight bends them into the form of a rainbow, the top resting on the ground, or lodged against some other tree.

Our boat returned at four o'clock, and the residue of us embarked and moved down to Castillo, a small town at the head of the Castillo Rapids, arriving after sunset. Here is an old Spanish fort, built two or three centuries since, and was once of great strength, but is now fast falling into ruins. There is a small garrison of Central American soldiers stationed here. The Fort, or Castle, covers about three acres, the walls are fifty feet high, and the whole is a succession of arches, and was probably bomb proof. It stands on an artificial hill, nearly a hundred feet high, and was constructed for the purpose of defending the entrance to Lake Nicaragua. At these rapids, the river rolls and tumbles for half a mile, and there is a hand rail-road upon which to transport the baggage by the falls.

#### DESCENDING THE RIVER.

May 2nd.—At the foot of the rapids we were put on board four small, light running steamboats. At six o'clock in the morning, we moved down the river, which here appears to be sixty rods in width, and having a considerable current. We find the same tangled growth on both sides of the stream, and no appearance of the works of man. The croaking of reptiles and the music of birds fill the air with a contrariety of

sounds. At nine o'clock we took our leave of these steamboats, and going on shore, walked a mile and a half down the river, in a path running near the shore, thus getting by another heavy rapid in the stream. At the foot of the falls, we found another and much larger steamboat with steam already up, waiting to receive us on board. In walking along the border of the forest this morning, we could hear constant exclamations of wonder. Some new and gigantic plant was discovered every moment, and the vast size and height of the trees, particularly the banyan, with its thousand pillars, filled the minds of our travelers with profound astonishment. It was the most gorgeous display of Nature's wealth, that many of us had ever beheld. Here in the midst of this vast wilderness, we were surprised to find a white man and his wife living and keeping a Grocery. They kept for sale, besides tropical fruits, liquors, pies, fried cakes, ham, good American cheese, and also hot coffee. They received a large amount of money as our little army passed along. Their tavern-house was merely a shed, without siding, and thatched with leaves. All the building necessary in this country, is something to keep out rain in the wet season. In erecting habitations, the point to be aimed at is not warmth, but coolness.

At noon, the baggage has all arrived, having been brought down the rapids in small boats, and being now all on board, we move on again down the river. The scenery of the banks similar to what has been noticed before. Alligators lazily float around us, or with wide, yawning mouths, lay sunning themselves on the sand banks, while the forest presents many shades of the liveliest verdure ever seen. Here are no dead or dry

trees and stalks to mar the picture. In the vegetable kingdom, all seems life and animation, and the whole region is an ocean of ever-living green, and undying beauty. The pencils of all the land-scape painters of antiquity could never give a true representation of the scenes along this noble river. Neither can the imagination of the poet conceive of its sublime beauties. At seven o'clock in the evening we arrived at an Island which is owned and improved by a planter and his family from the State of Mississippi. The whole island, of sixteen acres, is improved as a garden, for the production of tropical fruits and vegetables. The enormous growth of sugar cane, banana, orange trees, &c., sufficiently attest the extreme fertility of the soil. Sugar might be produced in Central America in sufficient quantities to supply the markets of the globe. Let the Anglo-saxon race take hold of this country in earnest, and it will soon become the center of wealth and commerce, as it is now the geographical center of the great American Continent. Some few American planters have already sugar plantations here, and we learn that their profits are great. Our boat made fast to this island, and lay by, as it is unsafe to run upon the river in the night, by reason of the shoals and sand-bars.

#### ADVENTURES ON A SAND-BAR.

May 3rd.—Moved on our way, making slow progress, the water being low, but giving us a better opportunity to admire the scenery around, which in magnificence seems rather to increase as we proceed. We passed a steamboat crowded with passengers. They are on their way up the river, and were fast upon a sand-bar. These

people are from the States, and came on the ships destined to transport us there. A tiger in a thicket saluted us with his strong voice, resembling no other sound I have ever heard. Lizards and Alligators becoming more numerous, and their appearance gives employment to a number of sportsman on board. Whenever one of these creatures is announced at a proper distance, a shower of balls from a battery of revolvers quickly induces him to plunge out of sight. We saw an Alligator sunning on a bank, that we judged was fifteen or twenty feet in length.

#### CENTRAL AMERICAN SOLDIERS.

In the course of the day, we have met several small fleets of sail-boats, bound to the Lake with merchandise, to be distributed in the interior. They were manned with natives nearly as dark as Indians, and naked, except a narrow strip of cloth around the middle.

I have omitted to mention, that since we landed, we have had a guard with us of Central American troops. There is an officer, and about a dozen privates. They are armed with muskets, but are bare-footed, and wear but little clothing, and make a most singular appearance for regular soldiers. If the Mexican armies consisted of such men, it is by no means surprising that they could not stand the charge of our brave troops. I should suppose that one good soldier would "chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." This guard was to protect the treasure, and was considered as responsible for its safety. Whenever we changed boats, the guard personally carried the sacks of gold dust.

## GREYTOWN AND THE BAY.

At one o'clock, P. M., we arrived at Greytown and landed. It stands upon the shore of a bay, not far from the mouth of the river, the water in which is fresh. There is a smooth, level green, half a mile in breadth, around the head of the bay, and upon this stands the town, consisting of about one hundred houses. Some few of the buildings are very good, but the majority of them are thatched with leaves. Here are quite a number of hotels, groceries, and stores, some of which are kept by whites, and others by blacks and mulattos. This place is put, by treaty, under the protection of England and the United States, and is the rendezvous of the Atlantic steamers of the Nicaragua line.

## EMBARK FOR NEW YORK.

The steamship Prometheus, for New York, lies in the bay, two miles in front of the town. Near her lies the steamship Daniel Webster, bound for New Orleans. Some of the passengers will go on board the latter vessel, but a great majority intend to land at New York.

The little town is thronged, and every business place crowded. The weather is intensely hot; some of the company are bathing in the waters of the beautiful bay, and others, in groups, are lying on the green grass, beneath the shade of the finest trees anywhere to be found. These trees dot the green, and are interspersed among the buildings. A man was buried here this afternoon, who had been killed by accident on board the Prometheus, just before she arrived at this port.

At nine o'clock in the evening, the two steamers fired their signal guns, for all passengers to repair on board



without delay. Instantly there was a tremendous rush for the small boats. Eight or ten of these were soon in requisition. Such was the eagerness to get on board, for fear of being left, that the moment a boat came to the wharf, it was immediately filled so as to sink it within a few inches of the water's edge. All were required to sit perfectly still, and in quiet order we moved two miles across the bay to the steamer, near which lay a United States man-of-war, (the *Cyane*,) who sent up from her decks a rocket, which rose to an unusual height. The splendid meteor was hailed with loud cheers from the numerous persons in the small boats. The water was perfectly calm, reflecting the stars as from another sky. Had the sea been rough, I think serious accidents would have occurred. In the course of the night, all got safely on board.

May 4th.—Just before sun-rise, the ship weighed her anchor and moved down the bay, and soon passed the headlands, and in the course of six hours entirely lost sight of the continent. We are now upon that division of water called the Caribbean Sea, which is now at a dead calm, and the ship moves with steady and rapid motion. We begin to feel at home, being in the waters connected with the Atlantic, and on our own side of the continent. We passed two small islands, ten miles to the right. They were well timbered, but I know not whether they are inhabited.

May 5th.—Within the tropics, the days and nights never vary in length, only from eleven to thirteen hours. The nights are so long, and the weather so warm, that I for one cannot lie in my berth through the night. After retiring to rest, I twice arose and sat up an hour

at each time. Constellations and stars are visible here, never seen in a northern country. A light breeze had sprung up from the north-east, which raised the sea in gentle undulations. The waning moon arose, displaying its crescent, casting a dim light upon the placid scene. A short time before six, the flaming luminary of day emerged from the ocean, rendering visible immense tracts of water, but no land in any direction. I perceive that the Daniel Webster is following in our wake, and appears to be about ten miles distant.

Since we have been embarked on the Atlantic side, I have seen no whales, or fish of any kind, nor any aquatic birds. All seems a barren, wide waste of water. On board this ship are no cattle, hogs or sheep, the only creature in the vessel, that seems destined to the slaughter, is a sea-turtle. He lies on his back, by the side of the gangway, with his fore-paws pinioned, in which position he has no power to turn himself over. The turtle is five feet in length, by about half that in breadth, and nearly eighteen inches in thickness, and will perhaps weigh three or four hundred pounds.—When we arrive at New York, this poor captive will be slain to please the epicurean tastes of the aristocracy of the Empire City. The turtle is said to be the most delicious meat ever tasted. The other live stock consists of many parrots, and several monkeys, purchased by various persons in Central America. The purchasers are taking them to the States, to be presented as pets to their wives, daughters, or sweethearts. The human-like chattering of the birds, and the still more human actions of the monkeys, helps a little to amuse the passengers, in the absence of more sentimental di-

versions. These birds have not yet studied English, and are said to speak only the Spanish language.

The monkey tribes certainly have a striking personal resemblance to human beings, but the resemblance is still stronger in their natural instincts. I have often been amused in observing the natural motions and dispositions of these creatures. It is quite curious to see the female hold her young in her arms to nurse, punish it for biting her, or for disobedience, and all their motions in eating. In short, they seem to belong not surely to the human species, but they form the connecting link between the race of man and the tribes of quadrupeds.

I am not of the opinion of Lord Monboddó, that monkeys are the progenitors of the human race. But still there is every reason to conclude that human beings sprung from tribes far less perfect than the present race. But no written history of such an origin, can of course exist, for the race must have advanced to a high degree of improvement before written language could have been invented; until then, no records could be kept, or monuments inscribed. The human race may have sprung from several different sources, and may have had their several origins at different periods. That the human race had a common origin, does not seem to agree even with the Mosaic account of creation, and the statement given of the early history of man. One race seems to be styled by the sacred historian, the "Sons of God," in distinction from the "Daughters of Men," and from the manner in which the subject is mentioned, it would appear that there was something wrong or forbidden in this amalgamation.

## MIXED CHARACTER OF THE PASSENGERS.

Latitude, at noon, fifteen degrees thirty-six minutes North; West longitude, eighty-two degrees. The sun is still directly overhead at noon, but having a fresh breeze from the north-east, the weather is much cooler than any we have experienced since crossing the tropic on the Pacific side. On board this ship there seems to be the most perfect system in all the arrangements. Without such order, it would be impossible to get along with such a mixed multitude. The steamer is a kind of floating city. Here may be found the rich and the poor, the high in office and the simple citizen. We have learned doctors, lawyers, and civilians. We have also many landmen, and some sea-faring men, self-conceited in an extreme degree, and yet profoundly ignorant of every scientific subject, yet nevertheless are so learned in their own estimation, that they can acquire no new information. A passenger, who had been a sea-captain, and had followed the sea for many years, affirmed in the most positive manner, that the tropic we had crossed, was that which is called the equinoctial line; whereas, we had been no further south than about twelve degrees north latitude. But such, of all men, are most positive in their opinions, having, as they affirm, gained their immense stock of knowledge by practice and long experience, and not from books.

Notwithstanding the variety of tastes, opinions, and dispositions, to be met with in this army of strangers, here huddled together, yet all is peace, and I have witnessed no quarreling since I embarked. This state of things is much owing to the manner in which the government of the ship is administered. Each one is made

to know his place, and no infringement on another's right is for a moment tolerated. A bulletin is posted each day at noon, stating our latitude and longitude, and distance run during the preceding twenty-four hours. This afternoon, saw numbers of flying-fish, and two very pretty birds, which the passengers affirmed were swallows. They perched on the chains, occasionally leaving the ship and flying off a considerable distance, and would then return and perch themselves side by side on the chains. They favored us with their company until nearly sun-down.

#### NIGHT REFLECTIONS—FIGHT OF BULLIES.

May 6th.—I got up several times during the past night, for the purpose of enjoying the cool breeze, and the prospect of a cloudless horizon. The stars sparkled with peculiar brilliancy. The decks were covered with unconscious sleepers, whilst I alone, seated upon a bench upon the upper deck, feasted my eyes upon the glorious works of Nature's God. I also thought upon the wonderful genius and inventive powers of man, as displayed in the construction of this ship, with its powerful machinery. In such things, I could realize the triumphs that mind has already gained over matter, and could look forward and anticipate still greater victories to be gained in time to come. Man will yet subject the elements to his control, and be able to ride the wild billows of the ocean, not in the least jostled or alarmed at the raging of the winds, or violence of the tempest. And the time will come, when such awful accidents as the bursting of boilers, and conflagration of ships, will no more be named, except on the page of



history. The burning of twenty or more tons of anthracite coal on board the ship every twenty-four hours, produces a volcano in constant eruption, and in the night a pale blue flame rises nearly twenty feet above the top of the smoke-pipe. The Webster is still in sight, and maintains her former distance.

The reign of profound peace has at length been broken. A fight has taken place, with fists and fingernails, between two gamblers who were playing cards in the steerage. The battle burst suddenly in the midst of a dense crowd of passengers, myself being one of the number. One of the belligerents being knocked down by his antagonist, and having his face badly bruised, and covered with blood, cried for quarter. His assailant suffered him to rise, whereupon the conquered warrior renewed the fight, by drawing a revolver and attempting to fire, regardless of the lives of the surrounding crowd. A bystander snatched the weapon out of his hand, and fired off the six charges over the side of the ship. The multitude, not knowing at the time the direction in which this incessant storm of bullets was sent, made a hasty and disorderly retreat towards the stern of the vessel, taking refuge in the small rooms and passages that line the sides of the gangway. Order was soon restored, but I afterwards saw the fallen and blood-stained hero swaggering about the ship in search of his victorious antagonist, and determined on renewing the fight. The passengers would have been quite pleased to see both the belligerents put in irons, and there kept until our arrival at New York. North latitude nineteen degrees thirty-one minutes. West longitude eighty-three degrees forty-five minutes.

Distance run during the last day, two hundred and ninety-two English miles. We are impatient to catch a breath from the invigorating gales of the north. No land in sight, and indeed the first we expect to see is the west end of the Island of Cuba.

May 7th.—I arose about two o'clock last night, and by star-light could distinctly see the land, distant four or five miles. It was the west end of Cuba. We ran along the coast about twenty miles; the country appeared level, but not very low. At three o'clock, we passed the splendid revolving light on Cape San Antonio. We are now in the Gulf of Mexico, and at sunrise had lost sight of land.

#### A DREAM—APPEARANCE OF LAND.

What a jargon of circumstances constitute a dream. During the latter part of the night, lying under one thin blanket on the open deck, the wind blew fresh and somewhat cool. Our ship was rolling a little, and proceeding at a rapid rate of motion. I slept, but of course not soundly. A person never dreams in sleep perfectly sound. I dreamed of being on board of a steamship on the ocean, and that they kept driving the fires and raising the steam higher and higher, until she attained the most fearful velocity, sometimes just skimming the water, and then again not touching the surface at all, but like a flying-fish leaping from wave to wave. At length the sea seemed to narrow down to a straight channel, like a broad canal; up this we passed, with velocity continually accelerated, until arriving at the head of this long bay, we run the ship out upon dry land, which seemed to be no obstruction at all to navi-

gation, but on we went, up steep hills and high mountains covered with snow and ice, and frozen rocks, the last descent being the steep side of a mountain, about three miles, down which the stately ship rushed with lightning speed, until arriving at the bottom, it plunged again into the ocean with a tremendous splash. I in the mean time being obliged to sit directly on the bow, I expected to be driven to the bottom; but, contrary to all probabilities, the ship shot off upon the smooth glassy surface of the main, as easily as though we had not taken this rough passage through the interior of the country, and in this manner had crossed an isthmus between two oceans. When I awoke, I was happy to find I had been sailing on fancy's airy ship. Such are the wild vagaries of a dream, but wild as they are, many people place great dependence upon them, and are greatly troubled when they happen to have one which, according to their standard of interpretation, is of unpropitious augury. Some even date their religious convictions and conversions, to some dream. Superstition, it would seem, is not entirely unknown, even in this enlightened nineteenth century.

At eight o'clock, came once more in sight of the coast of the island, from which we are distant fifteen miles. The country looks level towards the sea, but rises into high mountain ranges in the interior. I perceive no summits that appear to have had a volcanic origin. About ten o'clock, entered the Gulf Stream; the current here is but trifling. We have lost sight of the Webster, she having shifted her course for New Orleans. We are this afternoon running sufficiently near to shore to give us a very distinct view of the ad-

jacent country. Our own observation confirms the statements of former travelers, in relation to the beauty and fertility of the Island of Cuba, the queen of the Antilles. Sugar, coffee, cotton, tobacco, &c., are the most important productions. The island is of sufficient size to form a powerful State, being seven hundred miles in length. The inhabitants are of Spanish descent, but there are vast numbers of African slaves. Travelers inform us that no part of the world presents so great a variety of beautiful landscapes. I do not doubt this statement, its truth being proved by every observation taken from the ship. I can discover plains of wide extent, partially surrounded with mountains, of forms peculiar to themselves. Many summits round-over like the bottom of a bowl, and others of considerable elevation appear to be perpendicular on one side. There are some mountains that stand detached from others, and rise from the center of broad and fertile plains. I counted one hundred and sixty summits of hills and mountains, at a single observation. Back from the shore, for ten or fifteen miles, the land is level, or rolling; it then begins to rise into elevated lands.

#### LOPEZ AND FILIBUSTERS—HAVANA.

At four o'clock, afternoon, came near a small port and town, celebrated as the spot where Lopez with his "Filibusters" landed, for the purpose of revolutionizing Cuba. Near this town lay a Spanish frigate. She displayed her colors, and we returned the compliment. We are now so near, that we can see numerous country houses and many sugar plantations. Each of these looks like a small town of white buildings, and

each has its church and spire rising above groves of oranges. Several large ships in sight with canvas spread, apparently from Havana, and bound for New-Orleans. A ship under full sail, is an interesting object. Her motion is peculiarly graceful as she moves along, bowing her lofty head at every swell. At seven o'clock in the evening, came in sight of the large revolving light that stands on the Castle at the entrance of the harbor at Havana. At nine o'clock we were abreast of the light-house, and not far distant from Havana, that great emporium of commerce, but being in the night, could see nothing more of it than a multitude of lights in the City. Had it been day-time, I could have seen a vast crowd of shipping in the harbor, and the frowning batteries of the Moro Castle, bristling with cannon, or glistening with groves of bayonets. The city lies around the head of a bay, and is a place of immense commerce, and a town of as great importance as any one in the dominions of the Queen of Spain.

#### SLEEPING ROOM—NEPTUNE'S RIDE—WRECKERS.

May 8th.—Sunday.—We have had a strong gale during the latter part of the night. I slept as usual in the open air on the upper deck, fifty feet in rear of the smokepipe, and near the oscillating beams of the engine. No sleeping apartment is more congenial to my taste. The curtain is the cerulean arch of heaven, ornamented with a thousand resplendent suns; for a candle I have the immense blue flame issuing from the top of the pipe, and am lulled to rest by the heaving of the ship and the roar of the ocean.



There having been a strong and increasing gale through the night, the sea-god is abroad this morning, his foaming steeds shaking the spray from their curling manes. Old Ocean heaves beneath the wheels of his chariot, while our ponderous ship with all her living cargo, is tossing up and down as though it weighed but a feather. The wind however is fair, the sails are spread, and aided by the current of the Gulf-stream, we plow the waves in magnificent style. At ten o'clock in the morning, passed Florida reef, a station for the Wreckers. Several of their vessels were anchored here, also a ship that had been partially wrecked. The business of these Wreckers is to save the crews and cargoes of vessels in distress, great numbers of which are annually lost upon the shoals and rocks, so abundant in these seas. The Wreckers are entitled to a certain per cent. of the value of all the property they are instrumental in saving. This allowance is called "salvage." The business is lucrative, although dangerous, and the hardy Wreckers will put to sea in the midst of darkness and tempest, but have often been accused of practising deceptions in certain cases, by decoying ships, and causing them to run upon the shoals, and then going to their relief. There is a reef of rocks extending two hundred miles along the coast of Florida. It is a long narrow island, rising but a few feet above the water. Between it and the continent, runs a Sound, about twelve miles in width. We run parallel to this low and dangerous coast, and ten miles distant. At noon we passed a light-house which stands on a submarine rock, a mile or two in front of Florida reef.

## LIGHT-HOUSE ON FLORIDA REEF.

The building is of an ingenious construction, and stands on a circular row of heavy iron pillars, twenty feet or so above the surface of the water. The pillars are of great strength, so as to be able to withstand the violence of the waves in storms which roll under the edifice. We have just passed the tropic, and are again upon the north side of it. Our latitude at noon being twenty-three degrees fifty-four minutes. Distance, during the past forty-eight hours, five hundred and seventy-six English miles.

## PHILOSOPHY OF THE GULF STREAM.

May 9th.—We are moving rapidly, having a fair wind, and being aided by the Gulf Stream, the rate of which is here three miles an hour. When a strong north-east wind blows, the stream will sometimes run at the rate of six miles per hour, especially where it passes between Cape Sable and the Island of Cuba.

We have many arguments among the passengers as to the cause of the Gulf Stream and other sea currents that course their way through the ocean like rivers. I will state my opinion which may or may not be philosophically correct. I think the cause of the Gulf Stream is the diurnal motion of the Earth, instead of the trade winds, as has been so often suggested. The Earth rolls round daily from west to east. Pour water on a grindstone, and turn it slowly from west to east, and the water upon it, will move moderately from east to west, or in an opposite direction. Now, put a dam across the current and the water will accumulate or heap up against it, until its specific gravity will permit it to rise no higher.

A current will then of course proceed from the pond in a direction according to circumstances. The Western Continent owing to the great indentation of the coast between North and South America, forms a proper dam, against which the waters rush and accumulate until the Gulf Stream forces itself out at the straits of Florida, which gauges the width of the current, and gives it such an impetus as to send it a vast distance through the ocean, the impulse being kept up by continual accumulations of water in the Gulf. This is my present theory on this subject.

During the past night, we have passed the straits between Florida and Cuba, but without seeing land on either side.

#### AN ECONOMIST.

Latitude twenty-seven degrees fifty-two minutes. Distance run, three hundred and seventy-two English miles. I learn that some of our passengers have made large sums of money in California. One man, it is said, has eighty thousand dollars on board, and he is so economical, that he takes a steerage passage, feeling quite too poor to partake of the comforts of the cabin. The acquisition of wealth has the effect upon some men, to make them more penurious if possible, than they were before.

#### RESULT OF GOLD DISCOVERIES.

There has been much division among the passengers as to the late wonderful discoveries of gold in California and Australia, and the consequent increase of the circulating medium. I find myself obliged to differ from

the opinions of most of them, who seem to think that money cannot become less valuable, whatever amount is put in circulation. One gentleman was very positive that money would be worth precisely as much as it now is, if every man who has gone to the mines, returns in a year with each a million of dollars. It seems very clear to me, however, that should such an amount be realised, that the precious metals would scarce be worth transporting from one place to another, and must of course cease to be used as a circulating medium. The difficulty in understanding that money decreases in value as the amount in circulation increases, is the following consideration: A dollar will always be a dollar to the end of time. This is self-evident; hence, those who do not investigate the subject deeply, cannot comprehend how money can decrease in value. A ten dollar piece will doubtless continue to pass for ten dollars, but should the time ever come when ten dollars will purchase no more of the soil, labor, and average products of the world, than can be bought for one dollar at the present time, then money will have lost nine-tenths of its present value. Money is nothing more than one of the articles of the world's commerce, and is governed by the same laws of trade, as any other commodity. One law of trade is this: The price of any article depends on supply and demand. When, for instance, the supply of wheat is so great as to exceed the demand, being an excess over and above the wants of community, the demand for the article decreases, and the price is necessarily reduced. The same is the fact in reference to money. A celebrated author, whose works were published more than fifty years ago, calcu-

lates that money had lost three-fourths of its value during the three hundred previous years, in consequence of the mines of Mexico and Peru, and we may of course anticipate a further decline in the value of money, in consequence of the late discoveries of gold. But all such changes are produced gradually, and hence are not productive of evil consequences.—Another law of trade is this: The comparative value of an article depends on the amount of labor necessary to produce it. For example: The average price through the world of a bushel of wheat, is an amount of money called a dollar. If it were possible to ascertain the truth, it would doubtless be found, that since money has been used by man, it has taken the same amount of labor upon an average, to obtain a dollar from the mines, as it has to raise a bushel of wheat. This circumstance alone has determined the comparative value of the two articles. The inference, from the foregoing premises follows: If the time ever arrives when ten dollars upon an average can be produced from the mines with as little labor as it requires to raise a bushel of wheat, then at that time, a bushel of wheat will sell for ten dollars.

Thus it will be seen that money, like every other article of trade, decreases in value in the ratio of the decrease of the amount of labor necessary to produce it. By the aid of the foregoing theory, we are able to predict with certainty what will be the result of the late wonderful gold discoveries in California and Australia. The value of money will be reduced, or that which amounts to the same thing, the prices of other articles will advance.



During the day, passed Charleston, South Carolina, but far out of sight of the land. The sun sets behind a cloud.

THUNDER-STORM—PHENOMENON.

May 10th.—At ten o'clock, last evening, a black cloud hung over the sea, stretching along the western horizon. It soon began to emit sharp flashes of lightning, and to bellow with distant thunder. In the mean time, clouds arose on every side. The winds began to whistle through the rigging. The hardy sailors ran up the tall shrouds, manned the yards, and firmly lashed all the sails. The storm-king was abroad in his wrath, mustering his airy forces for a general war of the elements. The battle-ground seemed to be directly over our heads, where the opposing armies met and "joined their fierce encounter in mid-air." Peals of Heaven's artillery incessantly rolled. An hundred lightnings seemed to burst at once from every quarter. "Blaze crowded on blaze in rapid succession," rendering visible a vast expanse of the foaming water, giving it the appearance of a sea of liquid fire. The storm continued till near morning, but the ship, propelled by her powerful machinery, continued her course, plowing her way through darkness, rain and tempest, and making very good progress. At break of day, a vista opened in the west, disclosing a small space of the clear blue sky, but overhead and all around was darkness still, the clouds appearing as if rolled and twisted in a thousand coils. Innumerable chains of lightning were still darting along the cloud, covering the whole dark canopy with lines of crinkling fire. It was not one of

those storms from which much danger is apprehended by mariners, but some of the passengers were much frightened, one lady in particular, who came near dying through fear.

Since penning the foregoing description of the shower, I learn from the officers of the ship, who were on watch during the night, that in the fiercest part of the storm, a phenomenon, called a composant, was seen by them. Its appearance is that of a ball of fire, emitting a pale light. It rested for some time on the brass ball at the top of the mainmast. The first mate informed me that he had often seen such fire-balls at the tops of all the masts, and at the ends of every yard. The phenomenon of the composants is sometimes seen on land. A farmer of high respectability, informed me that when he lived in Massachusetts, some thirty years ago, he was one night returning from a grist-mill. A storm came on, attended by thunder and lightning. He was with an ox-team, and far from any house. Suddenly he saw lights attached to the tips of his cattle's horns. Soon after, similar lights were by him observed on the ends of all his wagon-stakes, and even one gleaming from the end of his whip-stalk. He confessed that he was some alarmed, having never heard of anything of the kind before, and not being able to assign in his own mind any philosophic cause for the phenomenon. They are, probably, either of an electric or phosphorescent nature.

To witness even an ordinary thunderstorm, would have been to me a rare sight, having seen nothing of the kind for nearly three years. Such occurrences seldom happen in California.

The ship Prometheus is two hundred and thirty feet in length, and eighteen hundred tons burthen, carpenter's measure. She is considered a safe conveyance, having encountered many a storm, passing unharmed through the fiery trial. She has two masts, standing about one hundred feet apart, between which are the smoke-pipe, and the oscillating beams of the engine, which is of five hundred horse-power. She carries five life-boats, but ought, I think, to carry many more—enough, at all events, to take all the passengers, in case of a wreck. If the ill-fated Independence had been supplied with a sufficient number of boats, no lives would have been lost. I cannot learn that this requisition of the law is ever complied with. As to the internal arrangements of the vessel, it is sufficient to observe, that they are substantially the same as those on board the Brother Jonathan.

#### THIEVING ON BOARD—BLACK-FISH.

As we approximate New York, thieves become more active. Several thefts were committed during the past night. One man had one hundred and eighty-five dollars taken from under his head while he slept, and another had his haversack cut open, and a gold specimen, revolver, and bowie-knife stolen. There are troops of such villains in California, and scores of them travel backward and forward on the steamships, for the sole purpose of plunder. In such a crowd, it is next to impossible to find stolen property, and money cannot be identified. Hence, these vile wretches escape detection. If they could be found, they might be dealt with according to the rules laid down in the code of Judge

Lynch. Latitude, thirty-three degrees twenty-nine minutes. Distance, three hundred and thirty English miles.

The companies owning the steamships, understand human nature. They know that man soon forgets his past pains, when he obtains present ease. So, as we approach the terminus of our voyage, there is less complaint of poor living among the steerage passengers. It seems to be the policy to have these passengers leave the ship with a favorable impression on their minds, remembering nothing but the luxurious fare which constituted a few of their last meals on board. A steamship company, after all, like a bank, or any trading company, is a "soulless institution," and goes for making the largest possible amount of money, by legal means. It seems to be a matter of policy to keep the steerage passengers poor, and feed those in the cabin with all the luxuries that can be obtained. Who would give three hundred dollars for a cabin passage, if he could fare as well in eatables in the steerage for one hundred and fifty dollars? This poor living in the steerage, induces many a close-fisted fellow, much against his bump of acquisitiveness, to take passage in the cabin.

We have got along thus far, with as much comfort as we could reasonably expect, and we ought not to "find fault with a bridge that carries us safe over." The weather being delightful, many small birds have been about the ship, and one resembling a wren, alighted on the railing, and was caught by a gentleman. The bird seemed to be perfectly domesticated. These birds are proofs that land exists somewhere, as was the fact in

reference to the dove sent out as a pioneer from Noah's Ark. All the fish we have seen this side the Isthmus, are a few flying-fish, and a shoal of black-fish. The last are of great size, and move leisurely along, and every few seconds display above water several feet of the length of their broad backs.

#### STORM OFF CAPE HATTERAS.

May 11th.—At ten o'clock, last evening, we passed Cape Hatteras, but not sufficiently near to see the lighthouse. The sailors say this promontory is never passed without encountering a gale, or a storm of some sort. They told us we might expect a tossing when passing this Cape.

At sun-down, last evening, the sky was clear, and we had about made up our minds that these evil predictions would not be realised in the present instance. But at eight o'clock, a narrow cloud began to show itself in the west, which soon began to gleam with flashes of lightning, and at ten o'clock, about the time we were abreast of the Cape, a shower came on, the rain poured down in torrents, while the lightning and thunder were incessant. It then ceased for two hours, after which we had another shower, somewhat more violent than the first. These circumstances went to confirm what the seafaring men had stated in reference to the dreaded Cape Hatteras. There was but little wind, however, and after both showers had passed, the sea was remarkably smooth. Soon after this, the wind shifted to the north, and we found ourselves in a different climate from any I had seen for years. Yesterday we were trying to screen ourselves from the sun's rays, by taking



shelter under the awning. To-day we are shivering with the cold, and crowding around the smoke-pipe to gain a little warmth.

#### A COMPOSANT SEEN.

During the night, we turned out of the Gulf Stream, in which the water is several degrees warmer than in the sea adjoining. At ten o'clock in the morning, we are off Norfolk, Virginia. We are near the end of our voyage, and are in hopes of taking dinner in New York to-morrow.

From the officers on watch, I learn that a composant was seen last night, during one of the showers, not as before, at the top of the mast, but six or eight feet below it. From the motions of these meteors, the seamen say they can predict the progress of the storm. If the composant rises, they have no fear; if it descends, the tempest will still increase in violence.

#### ARRANGEMENTS OF THE SHIP.

The great sea-turtle still lies by the side of the gangway. He seems to be a character the least troublesome of any on board. He eats no food at all, and loses neither heft or strength. When some reckless wight gives him a kick in the chops, as they often do, he only shuts his large bright eyes, but gives no other sign of disapprobation. If all were of his disposition, revolvers would soon be out of fashion.

The government of such a ship as this, has, like the General Government of a nation, several departments, each of which has a chief, and an office room for the transaction of business. A person belonging to one department, has nothing to do with the person or busi-

ness of an individual belonging to any other. The Captain is the executive officer, and all the departments are subject to his control and supervision. There is the executive department, consisting of the Captain and his two mates; the treasury or purser's department; the sailing-master's department; the commissary, or steward's department; the engineer's department, &c.

I perceive that all the departments to-day are engaged in putting the ship in prime order, so as to enter the harbor of New York in a becoming style. Tarred ropes are made to shine, various parts of the ship are painted anew, furniture is cleaned, the sails are clewed up in a snug and neat manner, and the whole vessel looks as trim as a courser fitted for a race.

#### ENTRANCE OF NEW YORK HARBOR.

May 12th.—I arose at break of day, and going out upon deck, saw a dark line of the coast of New Jersey, about sixty miles from New York. We were running parallel to the shore, and distant from it three or four miles. Numerous vessels in sight on all sides. At sunrise, objects on the shore became very distinct. The coast is level and no hills visible in the back country, but the whole landscape is dotted over with fine villages, farms, and country houses. A more calm and delightful morning is never seen in this latitude. During the past night, I do not learn that any thing extraordinary took place on board, except that a large number of a certain class of passengers had a bacchanalian revel on the forward deck, but my berth being in the second cabin, was so far astern, that I heard nothing of this grand exhibition of rowdyism until I heard of it this morning.

The sun is now half an hour high. We are only a mile from the Jersey shore. The prospect is rich and beautiful. There are a great number of buildings in sight, seven of which were of such great size and splendor, as to attract notice and occasion remark. At six o'clock we are passing the Highlands, standing on ground one hundred feet or so higher than the water. Here are two light-houses. At seven o'clock we are abreast of Sandy Hook, about thirty-six miles from the City. Sandy Hook is a low, long, and narrow point of land projecting two or three miles into the sea. Around it are several light-houses.

Staten Island is now seen distinctly ahead, and in very plain sight. No prospect in grandeur can surpass the approach by sea, to the city of New York. It will vie with the prospect of Constantinople as seen from the Hellespont, or Naples from its celebrated Bay.

Steamboats, sailing vessels, and small craft innumerable, now meet the view on all sides. Passing Sandy Hook, the west end of Long Island is four or five miles to the right, the Jersey shore on our left, and Staten Island in front. Eight or ten fine cities or towns are now seen on the surrounding shores. Vessels of all descriptions thicken at every step, and seem almost to cover the surrounding waters. Beacons and buoys are placed upon the shoals, and every precaution seems to be taken to ensure the safety of vessels entering the port, by night or by day.

It is now eight o'clock in the morning, and we catch a distant glimpse of the City of New York, with its boundless forest of masts, steeples and towers. All the passengers are now upon the upper deck, gazing with

rapture upon the bewildering and enchanting prospect around. No description can do justice to the scene. There is a perfect wilderness of beauty. As we near the delightful shores, we can see an hundred level lawns dressed in robes of vivid green, interspersed with groves of natural as well as ornamental trees. Innumerable residences are in sight, which for beauty of design and size, would do honor to the nobility of any country. These are indeed tenanted, not by titled nobility, but by the sovereign people who are the lords of the soil. At half past eight we are passing the Narrows between Staten and Long Islands. The channel is a mile or so broad, on either side of which are frowning batteries, in an admirable position to chastise any hostile intruder. We are now close to Quarantine, a large city on Staten Island, where ships from foreign ports are examined by the health officer. Quarantine extends two or three miles along the shore, and for some distance back. A chain of woody hills rise back of the town. There are numerous openings through the groves, displaying the fronts of retired country residences. Dispersed around the city are a profusion of fruit and ornamental trees now in full bloom. Our ship has stopped her wheels forty rods from the front of the town. Several small boats are coming out, and one of them bearing a flag, on board of which is the Health Officer. We have hoisted two beautiful banners at our mizen. The Health Officer has detained us one minute only, and we are again under way towards the City, distant nine miles. There are several light-houses at Quarantine, standing far out in the water. We are now rapidly nearing the Empire City.

Indeed, cities of imperial size nearly surround us. New York in front, Quarantine in the rear, Brooklyn and Williamsburgh on the right, Jersey City, Hoboken, and Newark on the left. The dwellings of a million people are within the reach of the naked eye. The sight is wearied in gazing at so vast, so varied a picture, and the mind is bewildered and lost in attempting to grasp and comprehend once so boundless a scene. We pass between two small green Islands, upon which are forts, displaying the glorious stars and stripes. At nine o'clock we are only a mile from Castle Garden and the Battery, and have an extensive view of the immense crowd of ships in the North and East rivers, as well as the harbor of Brooklyn. A moment after this, and our ship thundered her salutation to New York, and in two minutes more we were safely moored at the Battery, that splendid and extensive promenade, shaded with beautiful trees, and intersected with flagged and gravelled walks, the spot where countless throngs have been wont to assemble to cheer those illustrious individuals characterised as the Nation's Guests.



## CHAPTER XII.

City of New York.—Balch and Chapin.—New York Tribune.—Scenes on the Hudson.—Albany.—A ride in the Cars.—Lake Erie—Niagara Falls.—Characteristics of States.—Rail-Road Accident.—The Prairies.—Philosophy of Prairies.—Lost Rocks, or Boulders.—An Erroneous Impression.—Modes of Fencing.—View from the Car Windows.—Breaking Prairie.—Comparative amount of Labor.—Ride in a Hackney Coach.—The last day's Journey.—Summary of Distances in English miles.

### CITY OF NEW YORK.

May 13th.—This City stands on an Island, the ancient Indian name of which is Manhattan. The Island is about fifteen miles in length from north to south, and of irregular width, averaging about two miles. The city stands upon the southern end of the Island, of which it now covers about one third. Here are about six hundred thousand human beings congregated within a small space. There are two bridges connecting the Island with the continent, viz; Hærlem on the East side, and King's Bridge at the north end. This last is memorable as the one across which Washington retreated when the British army moved up from New York to attack him in his encampment. From present indications, the City will cover the whole Island within a century, and will then be the Commercial Metropolis of the globe, throwing London and Paris entirely into

the shade. New York, like all great cities, abounds in costly and superb structures. It would be tedious to give their bare names. The Astor House, and St. Nicholas Hotel, are buildings of immense size, and their interior decorations eclipse the splendors of oriental magnificence. Trinity Church is a massive structure, and has about it an air of solemn grandeur. The Crystal Palace with its glorious dome and numerous tall minarets, has an appearance peculiarly light and airy. It looks like some creation of the Poet's fancy. The Park is the most grand, picturesque and beautiful promenade ground that can be well conceived. It is a large open space in the midst of the crowded City, being fenced with an ornamental iron railing. It is studded with beautiful trees, and intersected with fine flagstone walks. At one end of the Park is a splendid fountain in a large vase, carved from granite, and supplied with water from the Croton works. At the other end stands that vast marble edifice, the City Hall with its lofty tower, upon the top of which, stands the marble statue of the Goddess of Justice, holding in her hands the sword and the scales. The whole ground is a velvet lawn of the most vivid green, whilst around the Park on every side the view is arrested by the fronts of the lofty buildings. Here thousands on thousands resort, and in the evening strains of soft music float along the air, reminding one of the arcadian groves, or the elysian fields of the Poets. Of all the structures which I visited in this vast City, none appeared more worthy of attention than the immense reservoir of the Croton water-works. It stands near the Crystal Palace, towards the upper end of the City. The form of the reservoir is square. I do not

know its size, but would judge it to be as large as a ten-acre lot. The walls are fifty feet high, constructed of massive blocks of hewn granite. They are twenty or thirty feet in thickness, and laid in cement, rendering them perfectly water-tight. The walls slope down upon the inside like a basin, and when I was there, was about two-thirds full of water. It was an elevated artificial lake, on which a ship of the line might be floated. Flights of stairs led to the top of the wall, which is about twenty feet in width, with a strong iron railing on each side. Here may be seen crowds of people promenading upon the top of the lofty wall, from which we have a very fine prospect of the Crystal Palace, and a large portion of the City and harbor. This reservoir is a structure of immense strength, and seems capable of enduring to the end of time.

#### BALCH AND CHAPIN.

May 13th.—During the day, I made several calls; one upon the Rev. W. S. Balch, who had recently returned from an interesting tour through Europe, Egypt, &c. I also called on the Rev. E. H. Chapin, whose fame as an eloquent lecturer and preacher, is known throughout the nation. I had a curiosity to see the man whose name had been so long familiar. He has a powerful physical organization, as well as gigantic intellect.

#### NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

I had the curiosity to visit the office of the New York Tribune, an immense establishment. The editors are a facetious set of fellows, and style themselves the “Phi-

losophers." With one of them I had some conversation upon a point in political economy, and soon discovered one particular in their theory to which I could not subscribe. He thought a protective tariff necessary, and that there is no use in exporting anything at all; that the best policy for our country would be to have neither imports nor exports, and produce only what we want for our own consumption. This seemed to me a strange doctrine for philosophers to advocate. But the philosopher was consistent with himself, and honest in admitting the legitimate result of his theory. My theory of trade teaches, that commercial exchanges between nations are for the advantage of both parties, and are also a necessity, fixed in the nature of things. One country produces an article which others cannot. Sugar and Cotton, for instance, can only be produced in mild or warm climates. Nations living in the frozen regions of the North need these articles. It is for their advantage to purchase, and equally so for the producer to sell. God has spread out the ocean as the highway for the accommodation of the world, and to facilitate exchanges between different countries. Any attempt therefore to interrupt exchanges, or obstruct the highway, by duties on importations, ought, it seems to me, to be regarded as a warfare against the laws of Nature's God, and opposition to the benevolent intentions of that All-wise Providence that has so ordered, that nations as well as individuals are mutually dependent upon each other for a large portion of their enjoyments. The circumstance that led to the conversation on this subject, was the fact that the editor opened my Manuscript Journal, and read in it the paragraph headed,

“Protective Tariff,” which the reader will find on the ninetieth page of this work.

May 14th.—It is the custom of most men on arriving by sea from California, to go in the first instance to a barber’s shop to get relieved from some useless appendages about the face and head, and then by visiting the hatting and clothing establishments, we soon are so completely metamorphosed, that we should with difficulty be recognised by a California acquaintance. Having passed through this ordeal, I resume my journey towards home, situated on the fertile banks of the Mississippi.

#### SCENES ON THE HUDSON.

Near sunset, I took passage for Albany, on board the steamboat Hendrick Hudson. This boat I am told is three hundred feet in length. The saloon is finished and furnished in a style of regal splendor. Being propelled by the most powerful machinery, the vessel moves up the river at an astonishing rate of motion. Twenty miles or so north of New York, upon the east side of the river, may be seen a vast number of retired country residences embosomed in groves of native trees. Here dwell the princely merchants of the Empire City. The rail-road running along the eastern bank of the Hudson river, enables trading men to be daily in their stores, and each night with their families, although dwelling fifty miles or more in the interior. Thirty miles or so up the river, we pass an edifice standing near the bank of the Hudson, upon a beautiful green, dotted with trees and surrounded by groves. The building is constructed of polished Sing Sing marble,



after the model of the old European castles of the feudal lords of the middle ages. At one end is a massive tower, rising considerably above the roof of the edifice. It was built and is owned by the great American Tragedian, Edwin Forrest. The readers of antique romance, in looking at this building, are reminded of enchanted Castles, and Knights in armor, serenading their mistresses by moonlight beneath the lofty gothic windows.

The evening was dark and starless, and we therefore had not the satisfaction of viewing the sublime scenery of the highlands or mountains among which the river winds its dubious way. A profusion of lights are occasionally seen gleaming from cities, towns, and villages, along the shore. A lengthy train running upon the Hudson rail-road shot past us like some fiery meteor, and its earthquake roar soon died away in the distance. Before sunrise we landed at Albany, the Capital of the Empire State. Distance, one hundred and fifty miles.

#### ALBANY.

May 15th.—Stayed in Albany during the day, and attended service at Mr. Thayer's meeting-house. Here the sound of "church going" bells from all parts of the City, make solemn music. How different from scenes I have witnessed in the interior of North America, where eternal solitude reigns except when disturbed by the yells of beasts of prey, or of men more fierce and wild. Albany is the third city in population in the Empire State, and a point where numerous rail-roads center; also the terminus of the great Erie Canal.

## A RIDE IN THE CARS.

May 16th.—At seven o'clock in the morning, stepped into the cars for Buffalo, and on we went enveloped in clouds of steam and smoke. Cities and towns were passed in quick succession. We get only a hasty glance at the country through which we pass, like a hurried examination of a map. Passing through Schenectady, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, &c., all of them cities of imperial size, we arrived at Buffalo at about ten in the evening. The distance is three hundred and fifty miles. The time, fifteen hours. Ours was the mail train, and we made sixty-seven full stops during the time, remaining in one place thirty minutes, and in another place fifteen minutes. But the rail-road is certainly a sublime style of traveling. Our approach is announced by a roar resembling that of a tempest of hail, accompanied by a tornado. A flame of fire goes before us, and we are curtained around with clouds of smoke and steam. Mortals have become daring and arrogant; they send the lightnings as news-boys to do their errands; they mount the car of Jupiter the Thunderer, snatch the reins from the hand of the "cloud-compelling god," and drive his fiery coursers through the world. What achievements will these audacious mortals next attempt. Distance, three hundred and fifty miles.

## LAKE ERIE—NIAGARA FALLS.

May 17th.—Late in the day, took passage on board the steamboat Northern Indiana, for Toledo, Ohio.—This boat is about the same size as the Hendrick Hudson, and is of equal splendor. We were out through the night, which was dark, but the weather calm. Lake

Erie is the most shallow of all the great lakes, being only two hundred feet deep. The bottom of course is several hundred feet above the surface of the ocean. If, as is generally believed, the Falls of Niagara shall ultimately wear the rock through to Buffalo, the lake will then be drained, leaving a vast level prairie country covered with rich alluvial deposit, with a river running through the center. This phenomenon will be most likely to be brought about by a slow and gradual process. If, however, this should take place suddenly, a sweeping deluge will submerge all the region around lake Ontario, producing a crash like the breaking up of the foundations of the earth. It is known that the rock at the cataract is constantly wearing away. If it proceeds but an inch in a thousand years, time will carry it through to the lake, and drain that immense inland sea to the bottom. Since the present organization of the globe, the Falls have worn seven miles back into the rock. Twenty-five miles still remain, so the present generation need not be so much alarmed as to move away from the lands threatened with this tremendous inundation. In the afternoon landed at Toledo, and called on Dr. J. Clark, an old acquaintance.

Distance, three hundred miles.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF STATES.

May 18th.—Stepped into a car upon the Southern Michigan Rail-road for Chicago. Eight hours sufficed to carry us from the State of Ohio to Illinois, passing through the whole breadth of Michigan, and a part of the State of Indiana; the distance about two hundred and fifty miles.

Each State in this great confederacy seems to have some physical characteristic to distinguish it from all the others. Ohio is remarkable for its heavy growth of timber, and its fertile soil. Michigan is a peninsula, surrounded on three sides by great lakes, and the interior filled with small ponds. The lands towards the south covered with scattering oak trees, of very uniform, though small size, while in the northern part of the State, are vast forests of pine, sugar-maple, and other northern timber. The soil well adapted to the production of wheat and other English grain.

Indiana is, in general, heavily timbered, but there are occasionally small but exceedingly fertile prairies.

Illinois is emphatically the "Prairie State." The whole is virtually but one grand prairie, dotted all over with groves, like clusters of islands in a green ocean. The groves are of every possible variety as to size and form. The prevailing timber is oak, of several varieties, with a great amount of hickory and walnut. There are no groves of pine, or other evergreen timber.

Arrived in the city of Chicago, at about four o'clock, afternoon, where I tarried through the ensuing night.

Distance, two hundred and fifty miles.

#### RAIL-ROAD ACCIDENT.

May 19th—Took the cars for Rockford, on the Galena and Chicago Union Rail Road. Chicago stands upon the south-western shore of Lake Michigan. In the time of the war of 1812, there was nothing here but a frontier Fort, to keep the Indians in check. Now, behold a City of seventy thousand inhabitants. Railroads from almost every point of the compass, find a

terminus here. The place seems destined very soon to become the great commercial emporium of the west. The harbor is crowded with shipping, and the whistling of steam constantly greets the ear.

The site of the City is but a few feet above the level of the lake, and this low ground extends back of the City a distance of twelve miles, and much of the land in this tract, in a state of nature, is covered with water. As the streets extend back, this marshy ground is drained. Ultimately the whole will be converted into building-lots, and gardens of extraordinary fertility.

Forty miles west of Chicago, we cross Fox River, at Elgin, a fine manufacturing village of two or three thousand inhabitants. No stream is superior to Fox river, for hydraulic purposes. It runs upon a rock bottom, composed of strata of blue limestone. The descent of the water is such as to admit of a mill-dam almost every mile, for a great distance upwards from its mouth.

Between Elgin and Belvidere, we met with a railroad accident, though not a very serious one. Three cows and a yearling heifer, stood upon the track as our train approached Marengo. We were, at the time, upon a long embankment, from ten to twenty feet high. The engineer saw the cattle, and raised a loud whistling to scare them away, at the same time the motion of the train was slackened by the brakes. The engineer says the cattle stepped from the track, and he gave the signal to move on. Unfortunately, the cattle rushed again upon the track, and were by this time so near, that the train could not be stopped. The cow-catcher tumbled the three cows down the embankment, twenty feet or so, landing them in a mud-hole.



The cows got again upon their feet, and I saw them in a woful plight, covered with mire, and standing by the fence. In the meantime, the yearling was knocked down, the locomotive, wood and baggage cars, passed over the body of the animal, but the two next cars, being second-class passenger cars, had each a wheel thrown off the rail, by which time the train was stopped by the brakes. No person was injured. The passengers got out, and in the course of half an hour succeeded in getting the cars back again upon the track, and the train went on at a prodigious rate of motion, for the purpose of making up for lost time.

We passed through Belvidere, a beautiful town of four or five thousand inhabitants, standing on a fine prairie, near a grove. We were soon in Rockford, a village in size similar to the last, and standing upon both sides of the Rock river. This place is the present terminus of the road. Here is a splendid railroad bridge across Rock river, constructed of stone.

Distance, eighty miles.

#### THE PRAIRIES.

May 20th.—The word “prairie,” simply signifies a meadow, and all such tracts in a state of nature are covered with native grasses of different varieties. These natural pastures are as good as those that have been cultivated, and the “prairie hay” is but little, if any, inferior to timothy and clover. Many persons who have never travelled in the Mississippi valley, conceive that a prairie is a tract of land perfectly level, and covered with a rank growth of tall grass. This impression has doubtless been made, by reading the common

school Geographies now used and taught to children in every part of the country. In those books I find a prairie described as before stated. It is time that such a false impression be removed. I will admit, that near the banks of some large rivers, tracts of low, wet land, may be found, producing rank and tall grass. But not one acre of prairie in a hundred is of this character.

The prairie country is by no means a dead level, but is beautifully diversified with hills, and swells of land, of different elevations, similar to countries that are naturally covered with forests. The grass upon them is rather short, and not generally as tall as timothy and clover. The prairie looks some like an old meadow, that has been improved for so great a length of time that the grass is somewhat "thin," being crowded out by various weeds and flowering plants that have sprung up. In the western country, rivers have wide bottoms, or intervals. These are somewhat level. But a small part even of these is covered with the tall grass, and when that is found to be the case, it is only upon the low and sunken spots. The inhabitants and farms are principally to be found upon the high, rolling prairie.

There are numerous springs of good water, and the streams have a rapid descent, and have, in general, pebbled or rocky beds. The soil on the high prairie is very fertile, having originated from the decomposition of successive generations of grass. The vegetable mold, of a dark color, is commonly about two feet in depth. Underneath this lies a thick stratum of clay. Not the least appearance of stone is to be seen upon the high prairie. Yet the whole country is based upon strata of horizontal rocks, and building-stone is found in the sides

of ravines, and the banks and bluffs of rivers, and can generally be found in all parts of the prairie country.

The Mississippi valley is the only real agricultural portion of North America, upon the east side of the Rocky Mountains. If our fathers had landed here, instead of at Plymouth Rock, New England might have been a wilderness to this day.

#### PHILOSOPHY OF PRAIRIES.

There is no appearance, or even probability, that these prairies were ever cultivated, or ever had timber growing upon them. Upon digging, we find no appearance of the roots of trees, either decayed or sound. The surface of the land is perfectly smooth. If trees had ever grown here, or had the land ever been cultivated, the surface would not have been left thus even. To what philosophic cause can the prairies be attributed? I will frankly express my opinion on this, as I always do on every subject. I think the waves of old Ocean once rolled over this part of the world. During that long period, the general surface of the land was formed when covered with water. When the waters retired, grass and vegetation sprung up, and has ever since maintained the ascendancy over timber. Since that time, timber has taken root along the water-courses, and has been gradually making encroachments upon the prairies. I regard the grassy prairies as more ancient than the groves.

The horizontal strata of limestone rocks upon which the country rests, is full of petrifications of marine shells. This very season, a large petrified fish has been found imbedded in a strata of rock in this State. This speci-

men was discovered on high land, by the workmen in excavating for the rail-road. How came fishes and shells imbedded in the rocks, thus far in the interior of the continent, unless the Sea-God once held dominion here? Geological science alone enables us to understand anything at all in relation to these and such like mysteries of nature.

#### LOST ROCKS, OR BOULDERS.

In various parts of the prairie country are large rocks, called boulders, lying upon the very surface of the ground. These boulders are of a species of rock, entirely different from any others found in the country. By some process in nature, they must have been transported here from some distant region. Their native country was, perhaps, the Ozark Mountains, in Missouri, or they might have come from the base of the Rocky Mountains. But how came they here? By what means did these heavy rocks travel a thousand miles? Answer:—An ocean once extended from here to the Rocky Mountains. These rocks were frozen into huge cakes of ice. The tides broke the ice loose from the shore. The strong westerly winds of winter drove the ice before it, until they grounded in the localities where they are now found. Such is my opinion on this subject. If any one can suggest a more rational hypothesis, I am agreed. These boulders are termed by the inhabitants, “lost rocks.”

#### AN ERRONEOUS IMPRESSION.

In the Eastern States, a prejudice exists against the country lying in the Mississippi valley, in consequence

of the numerous extensive tracts entirely destitute of timber. Some of the prairies in Illinois are of sufficient size for a number of counties, in which but little or no timber can be seen. The question is often asked, can such districts ever be settled and improved? I reply in the affirmative. These prairies can and will be all settled, at no very distant period. The Grand Prairie is even now pervaded by the great Illinois Central Railway. Flourishing towns are starting up as if by magic, at short distances along the entire length of the line. Timber for fuel, fencing and building, is by this means conveyed to every locality where it is required.

On the large prairies the soil is peculiarly fertile, and the expense of fuel and fencing bears no proportion to the cost of clearing heavily timbered land of its natural growth. Wood is at present used for fuel, in all parts of the State, but in some localities the price is as high as three or four dollars per cord. If wood, for fuel, should ever fail, coal will supply the deficiency, and of this article the State contains vast and inexhaustible strata.

#### MODES OF FENCING.

Most farms in Illinois, are at present enclosed by rail fences. Many, however, use boards for that purpose, and a few lots are fenced with split or sawed pickets, or palings, and some few farms are enclosed with wire fencing. Some of the best improved and fenced farms in the State, are situated six or eight miles from any growing timber.

#### VIEW FROM THE CAR WINDOWS.

Farmers have discovered one considerable advantage in having their land far from the groves. In such



places their crops are never disturbed by crows, black-birds, or squirrels. Hedges, of Osage orange, are now coming into use, and from appearances will in a few years supersede all other modes of fencing in the prairie country. In three or four years, it forms a barrier impenetrable by horses, cattle, sheep, or swine. Farmers who settle on the prairie, far from timber, soon have their buildings surrounded by artificial groves of the most splendid locusts, or orchards of apples and peaches.

No prospect can be more rich and beautiful, than that which may be seen from the windows of the cars, as you roll through oceans of verdure, dotted over as far as your sight can reach, with rural dwellings, embowered among ornamental trees, and surrounded by rich fields, blooming orchards, and flowery gardens. Such is the appearance of Northern Illinois, even now, and it is scarcely a score of years since the wolf, and timid deer, were the undisputed possessors of the whole region. How will this country appear when a century shall have rolled away?

#### BREAKING PRAIRIE.

Those who have never visited the Prairie country, have heard the alarming fact stated, that the turf is so strong, that five or six yoke of oxen are required to turn over the green-sward. I admit that such teams are frequently used in breaking prairie. In this case however, the plows are of huge size, and cut a furrow from twenty-four to thirty inches wide. With an ordinary plow, cutting a furrow twelve inches in width, I have seen prairie broken up with the aid of one span of horses. The motive in having so heavy a plow, pro-

pelled by a team of such strength, is to break a greater number of acres in a day. For example:—A man with a light plow and team will break one acre in a day, whereas, with a heavy plow and strong team, a man can in a day break three acres. The large breaking plows are guided in their proper course by means of two wheels running upon an axtle-tree, and firmly fastened to the forward end of the beam. Being furnished with this apparatus, a driver of the team is all that is required, the plow runs alone without any person to hold it. The surface of the ground being naturally smooth, furrows lie even, like planks jointed and laid in a floor. The edges of the plowshare are always kept sharp and keen, by means of frequent applications of a file which the driver always carries with him for that purpose. When a field is broken up and fenced, it may then be considered as being in the highest state of cultivation. Indeed it is in a better state of improvement, and more perfectly fitted for a crop, than is generally found to be the case in fields once covered with timber, after fifty years of cultivation. The turf being all completely turned over, is soon decomposed and reduced to a fine, dark, rich mould, admirably adapted to the production of wheat, barley, oats, indian corn, potatoes, and all kinds of garden vegetables. Such are a few of the advantages of a prairie country in an agricultural point of view.

#### COMPARATIVE AMOUNT OF LABOR.

Those best qualified to judge, are of opinion that it requires a similar amount of labor to cultivate one acre of land in the Northern States, that it does three acres

in the prairie regions of the West. The western farmer has a decided advantage over the eastern, although his produce may sell at prices one third lower. But the advantage will still be greater when rail-roads and other facilities of communication shall equalise prices in all parts of the Union. This state of things is rapidly approximating. The Mississippi Valley possesses advantages in the construction of rail-roads much superior to any other large division of the United States. The great Father of waters and its innumerable branches, furnishes an extent of inland navigation unprecedented on our globe, amounting to twenty thousand miles.

#### RIDE IN A HACKNEY COACH.

May 22d.—After having been detained one day at Rockford, I have at length procured a passage on board a hackney coach for Freeport, twenty-eight miles further towards home, “sweet home,” from which I have been so long absent. The whole distance is prairie, except two or three miles through a piece of timber, called Twelve Mile Grove. Near this place we cross the grading of the Galena and Chicago rail-road. I learn that the road will be completed to Freeport by the first of September next, and through to Galena within a year from that time. This will be the opening of a great thoroughfare into the heart of the lead region, as well as to all the country lying upon the upper Mississippi. Two or three miles to the north of the road which runs from Rockford to Freeport, there is an immense body of timber running along the banks of the Pickatonia river, which, passing by Freeport, discharges its waters into Rock river a short distance above

Rockford. In passing over the prairies in a common carriage, the traveler is surprised at the smoothness and perfection of the road, which has never been improved by human hands. The wheels never jolt or grind over rocks, but roll on as silently as they would upon the most highly finished turnpike. If it were not for the obstruction of rivers, a traveler might lay his course by the compass, and travel through the entire length and breadth of the State of Illinois, paying no attention at all to the roads. Such would have been the fact, while the country was in a state of nature. At present, however, he would find his course frequently interrupted by enclosed fields, towns, and cities.

We arrived at Freeport about sunset, and took lodgings for the night. This village contains three or four thousand inhabitants, has five or six beautiful churches, a court-house, and other county buildings. The place is new. The dwelling-houses are either of brick, or else of wood, and painted white, and the town has the appearance of great wealth and business. The impulse given to trade by the approach of the iron horse, is already visible. The numerous high and common schools in the place, are tangible proofs of the enterprise and intelligence of the citizens. Distance, twenty-eight miles.

#### THE LAST DAY'S JOURNEY.

May 23d.—The day has at length arrived, so long desired, in which my long and wearisome journey is to come to a termination. A hackney-coach is my conveyance, and we roll along through small groves of timber, and anon over the green rolling prairies, dotted here and there with the rural dwellings of the farmers.

Sixteen miles bring us to a splendid body of timber, called Cherry Grove. It is like a verdant island in the midst of an ocean of green. It is surrounded with fine farms, on which are dwellings displaying the wealth as well as the taste of the inhabitants. But the circumstance which makes this grove so peculiarly interesting to me, is the fact that it is situated within the county of Carroll, and only ten miles from my own humble dwelling. Passing the grove, and moving down a gentle descent for five or six miles, the town of Mount Carroll hove in sight, and soon we alighted in the street, where I was truly happy in recognising the familiar faces of friends and acquaintances. Time had made some slight changes in their looks. As to the town, it had more than doubled its size during my absence. It is a flourishing little village, of about eight hundred inhabitants, containing a court-house, of stone, three churches, a flourishing academy, common schools, &c. It is expected that the Chicago and Mississippi Air-Line Rail Road will be soon constructed, and pass near this place, when it will be a point of immense importance. Here is already a steam and water-power flouring mill, iron foundry, and other manufacturing establishments. A fine clear stream, called Carroll Creek, winds through the town, and is of sufficient size for mills. The beauty and richness of the country around, has been eulogised by every traveler who has passed along this way. The village stands near the border of a large grove, and ten miles from the Mississippi river.

After a short halt at the town, I walked along the road, and in a few minutes came in sight of a thick clump of tall locust-trees, in the midst of which our



“own dear cottage” stands embowered. Approaching the house, familiar objects multiplied at every step. There was the old brindle-cow, with her honest face, cropping the prairie grass. Her progeny around had grown beyond my knowledge. There were flocks of poultry, and bevvies of pigs, that were total strangers to me. Old Turk, the dog, bristled up in alarm at the intrusion of a stranger—he being an individual that had been received into the family, during my absence. The apple and peach trees had started up, as if by magic, to a wonderful size. The locust trees, which were mere saplings when I left, were now waving, their tops full forty feet in the air. Everything looked strange, even around my own door, and I seemed to myself to have been suddenly startled from a “Rip Van Winkle” sleep of three years two months and twenty-three days.

My wife was at home—my arrival unexpected.—She could scarce believe it to be myself. Her exclamations were violent and impassioned. “Is it you, Franklin? It is not you!—I know it is not you!” &c. The surprise could have scarce been greater, had one arisen from the grave.

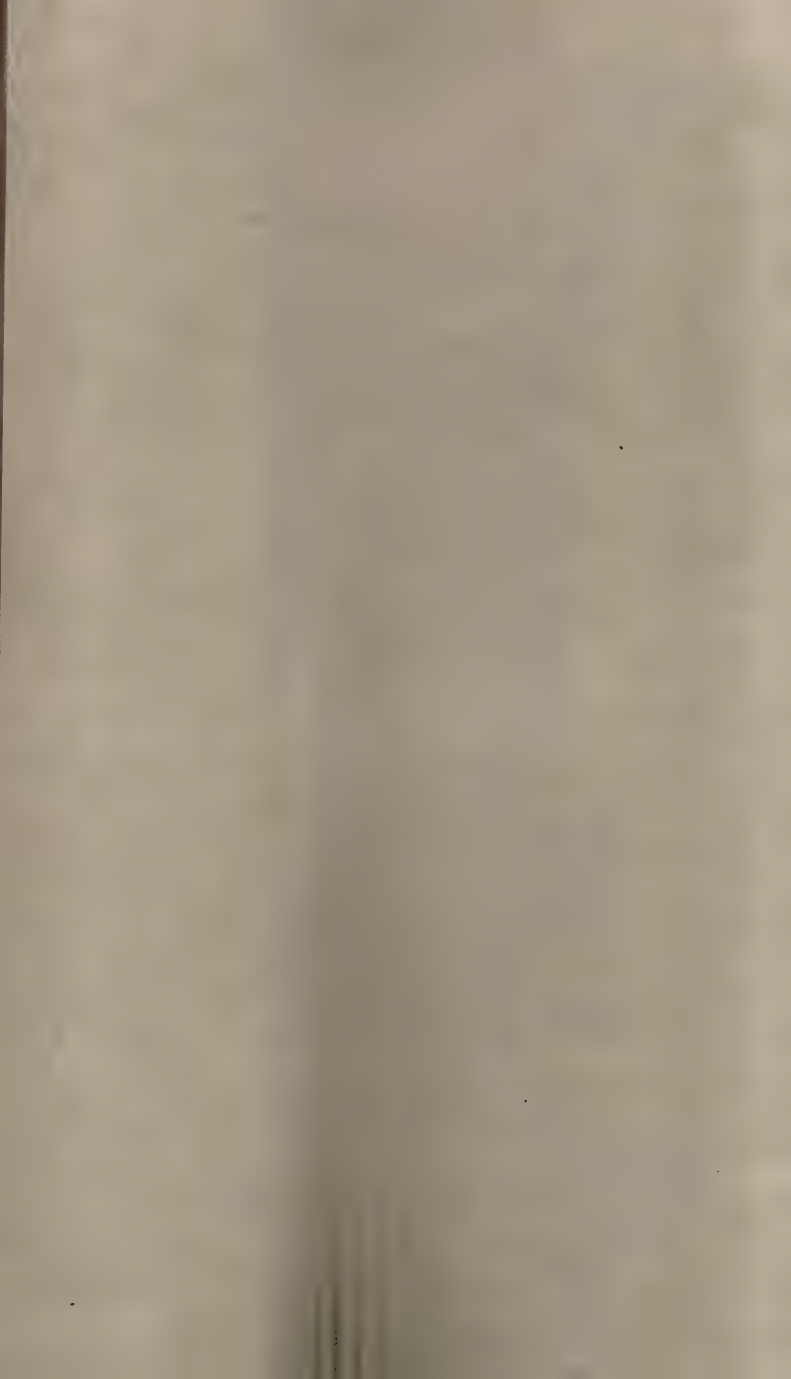
I can say with the songster—“Home, sweet home! there is no place like home!” I have no desire to take another tour of the same kind. I have, however, been more fortunate than many California emigrants. While thousands have left their bones beyond the snow-clad summits of the Sierra Nevada, I have lived to get home, in tolerable health, and find my family and friends as well as usual. Though not loaded with the glittering dust, yet I feel grateful to that protecting Power that rules the destinies of unnumbered beings, throughout unnumbered worlds. Distance, twenty-five miles.

## SUMMARY OF DISTANCES IN ENGLISH MILES.

From Mount Carroll, Illinois, to San Francisco, . . .	2,302
From San Francisco to San Juan del Sud, . . . . .	3,100
Through Central America, . . . . .	210
From Greytown to New York, . . . . .	2,500
From New York to Mount Carroll, . . . . .	1,133
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Entire length of the journey, . . . . .	9,245
Time, from San Francisco to New York, twenty-five days.	

THE END.













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