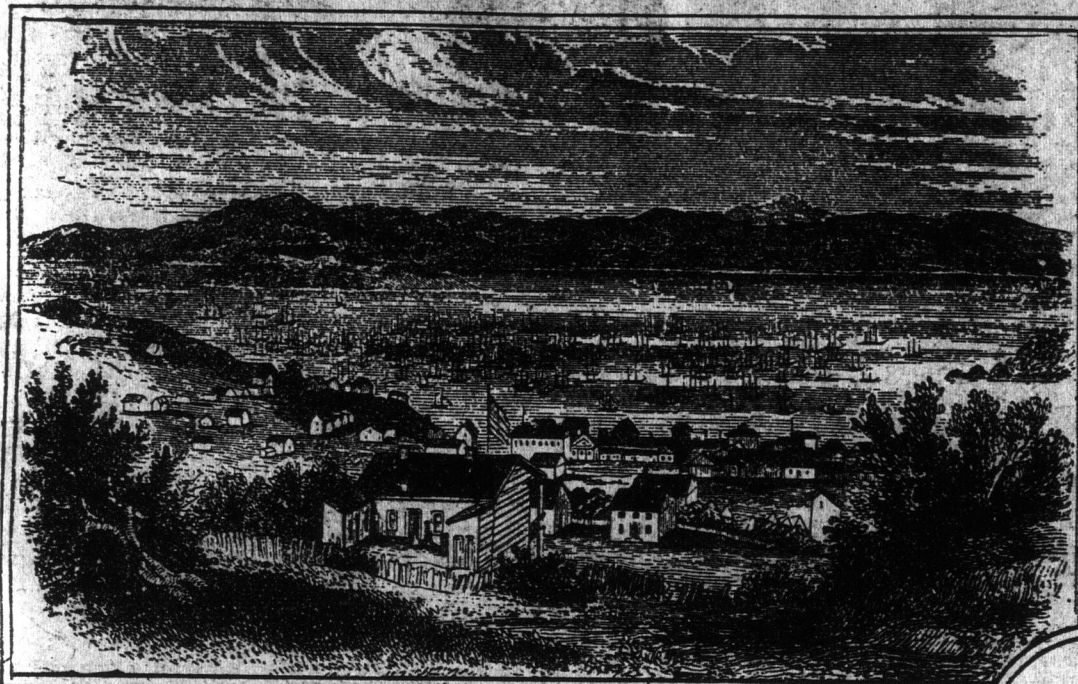
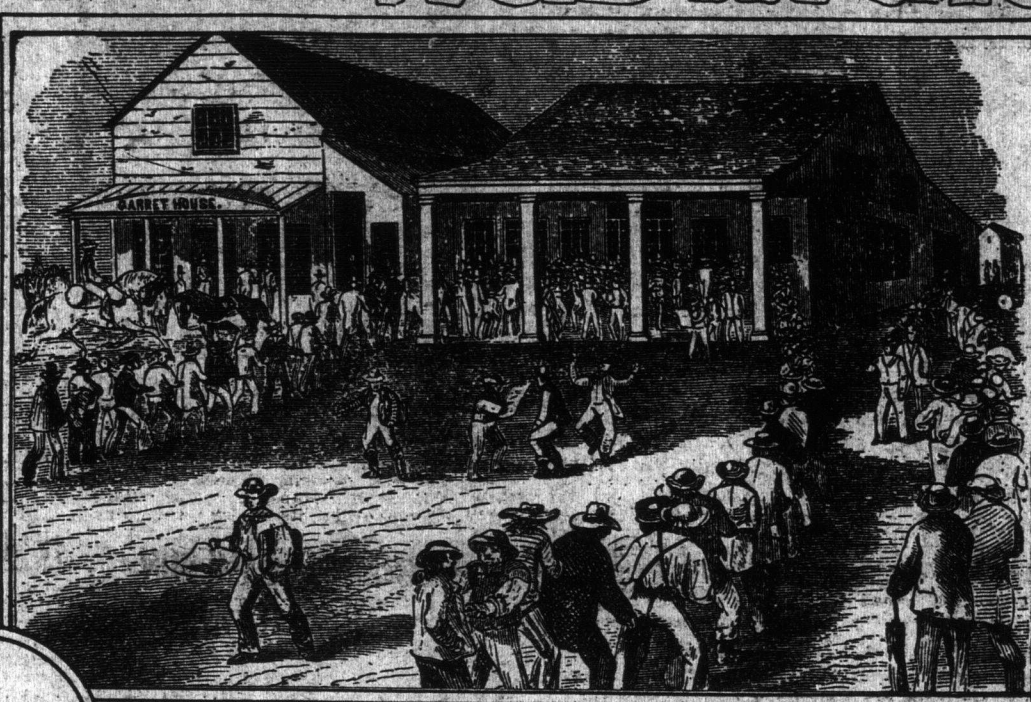


What California Was in the Rough



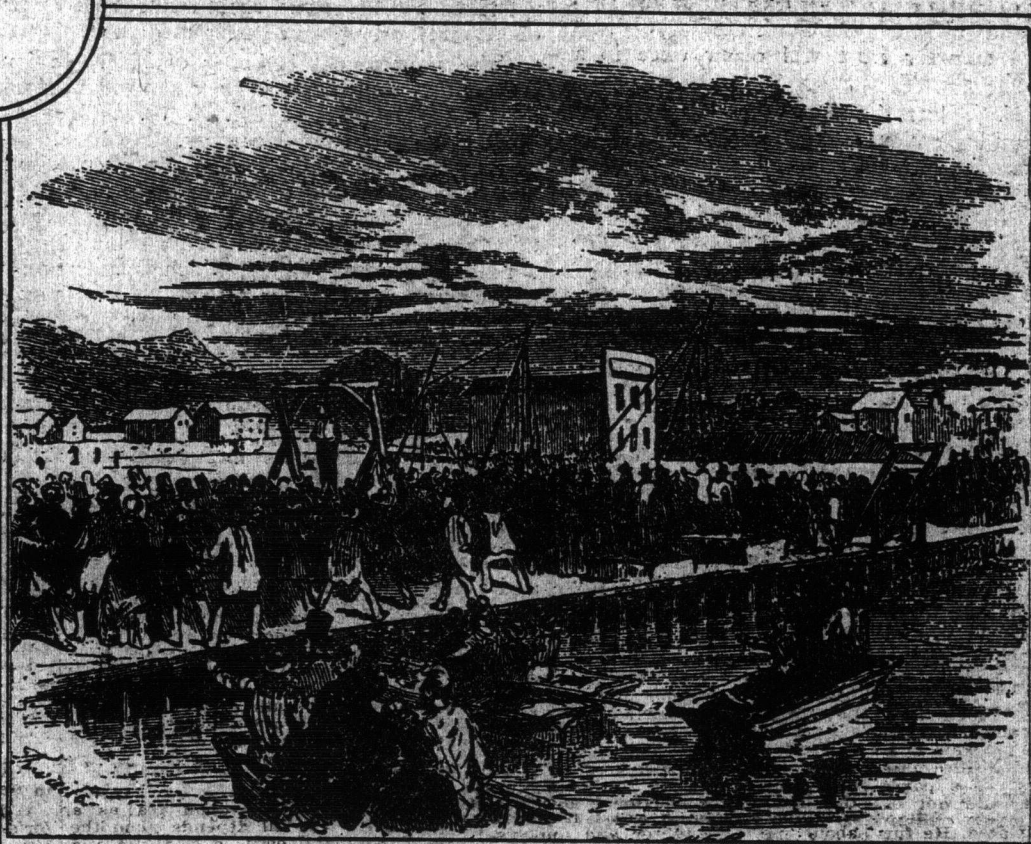
SAN FRANCISCO IN 1849 FROM HEAD OF CLAY ST.



THE POST OFFICE, CORNER OF PIKE AND CLAY STS.



EMIGRANT TRAIN



HANGING OF JAMES STUART



WITHIN the past few years there has arisen on the Pacific Coast a popular demand for stories of days that are gone and of people who moved in those days and contributed by their enterprise and example in forming the nucleus of communities and industries that have just begun to expand, and the opening of boundless resources that are now rapidly approaching the age of development. California, from the date of its discovery by the early voyageurs to the time when its golden placers were uncovered, and since, abounds in events of deep interest to men of the present day. British Columbia, surpassingly rich in romantic incident and stories of adventure, has contributed largely to the reminiscent literature of the Pacific Coast. Her people have ever been generous patrons of books that deal with the history of Britain on the Pacific, and which have found readers far beyond the confines of the province.

In the year 1854, it occurred to three literary gentlemen of San Francisco that it would be an excellent thing to collate and publish in one volume a history of California from its first settlement down to the date of publication. It was believed by the authors that such a work would be valuable in days to come as a book of reference, and that future writers would deal with stirring events as they occurred, and so form a valuable endless chain for the information of yet unborn generations. The book is long out of print, and is very rare. A copy of the work—which is called "The Annals of San Francisco"—is in the possession of Mr. Frank Sylvester, of this city, and he has kindly placed it at my disposal for review, which I propose to do, interspersing many incidents which came under my own notice. The book contains nearly 1,000 pages. It is profusely illustrated, and deals with the historical, political and social sides of life in the Golden State, from its first discovery to the year when it was published. The authors were Frank Soule, John H. Gilson, M.D., and James Nisbet. Mr. Soule and Mr. Nisbet were editors of the San Francisco Chronicle, a respectable and widely-read newspaper of that day. It died several years before the newspaper now issued at San Francisco under the name of the Chronicle was thought of. Mr. Soule was an American, Mr. Nisbet a Scotchman. Both were writers of force and ability. Mr. Nisbet wrote the heavy editor-

ials and sometimes acted as dramatic critic for his newspaper. One day there appeared in the Chronicle a bitter criticism upon a company of players who then occupied the stage of one of the theatres. The manager met the regular dramatic writer of the Chronicle, on the street and cowarded him, the critic quaking under the lash and offering no resistance. The following day a card appeared in the Chronicle which stated that the theatre man had whipped the wrong man. The writer of the offensive article, it added, was Mr. Nisbet, who, however, was not a fighting man, as every one knew. Later in the day the manager attacked Mr. Nisbet and struck him with his whip, whereupon the sturdy Scot wrested the weapon from his assailant and gave him a most exemplary thrashing with his fists, blacking both eyes and smashing his face to a jelly. Another characteristic anecdote of Mr. Nisbet may be mentioned here. In 1864 he sailed in the steamship Brother Jonathan for this port on a holiday excursion. The vessel struck on a reef and was lost, with nearly all on board, which included an American general and all his staff. Mr. Nisbet's body was picked up some days later, and in one of his pockets was found a memorandum book in which he had written his will in lead pencil, as the vessel was going down. The handwriting showed not the least tremor. He mentioned the fact that he was facing death, and directed how his property should be distributed. This pencil will, unwitnessed, was admitted to probate at San Francisco, and the property was disposed of as the will directed. Of Dr. Gilson I have no recollection, but he was undoubtedly a man of note, or his name would not have appeared as one of the contributors to the work I have before me.

California was discovered by the Spaniards about the year 1542. Sir Francis Drake, in 1577, visited California and called it New Albion, taking possession of it in the name of Queen Elizabeth. The admiral and some of his people, traveling a short distance in the country, saw so many rabbits that it appeared an entire warren; they also saw deer in such plenty as to run a thousand in a herd. The earth of the country seemed to promise rich veins of gold and silver, some of the ore being found on digging. This was the first authentic information of the existence of mineral wealth in California. There is nothing to show that Sir Francis discovered San Francisco bay. The natives he found very friendly and numerous. The country was afterwards

visited by English freebooters, who ravaged some of the small towns, but Cortez, the Spanish navigator, took possession of the country and the name of New Albion was changed to that of California.

The Jesuits early established missions in California. They built churches, schools and residences of adobe (sun-dried bricks), and converted many of the tribes to Christianity. In 1767 the Jesuits retired from the territory, and the Dominican monks took charge of the mission work. The missionaries, nearly two hundred years after Sir Francis Drake's visit, discovered San Francisco Bay and named it after St. Francis, their patron saint. The Fathers showed good judgment in selecting a site for their mission buildings. It was situated in a small fertile plain, about two miles from the centre of the present city of San Francisco, which was called Yerba Buena (good herb), because of the prolific growth of vegetation that was everywhere noticeable. Around these humble buildings was destined to grow the mightiest city of the west, which in wealth, population and commerce has since outstripped many of the oldest communities on the Atlantic seaboard.

Despite its genial climate the native population was sparse. The priests in 1802 took a rough census, and reported that the inhabitants numbered in the whole of the vast territory only 15,562, but that estimate only included the converted Indians, there being no means of ascertaining the number of wild Indians, or "gentiles," as they were called by the Spaniards. Humboldt in the same year confirmed the priest's figures.

The natives were of the most degraded type. They were known as diggers. They subsisted mostly on fish, because it could be obtained with the least exertion. Game there was in plenty, but unless it backed up to their doors asking to be killed they did not trouble to chase it. Their huts were most miserable, and for a white person would be uninhabitable at any season. Their persons and houses were indescribably filthy. They never took a bath unless when a canoe, probably nauseated by the horrid fumes from the natives' bodies, turned over and dumped its occupants into a flowing stream. I once met a white teamster in the Okanagan who boasted that he had not washed his face in ten years! I asked him when he last had a bath, and he answered, "Not since I was a baby and my mother did it for me." It is safe to say that the digger Indians of California are (perhaps I should write were) the lowest grade of humanity in America. Not satisfied with uncleanness, in their wild state they had a habit of painting their faces and bodies with a red and black substance resembling paint, which increased their repulsiveness and imparted to them a "stickiness" that seemed to say to the clean whites, "Hands off." You know the old saying, "You cannot touch pitch without being defiled." Neither could you handle a California Indian without carrying away some of his dirt. The

tribes were stupid, slothful, brutal, indolent; in fine, they had a most wretched want of everything which constitutes the real man and renders him useful to himself and society. Among such people did the cultivated men at the missions labor, often without seeing any good results; but in some instances with a certain amount of success that reflected most favorably upon their exertions.

As early as 1854 I find the writers of the "Annals" speculating as to the "manifest destiny" of the United States, and predicting the annexation of the Sandwich Islands and Japan. The Sandwich Islands have been long since annexed, but in the meantime the Japanese have awakened from a sleep of centuries and he would be a man with a vivid imagination who should today prophesy that the Japanese would ever become American subjects or citizens. Civilization was forced on the Japanese by the government of the United States. They were forced to open their ports to commerce. Today the Americans are fortifying the Pacific Coast and building Dreadnoughts with feverish haste, in anticipation of a war with the nation upon whom they forced civilization sixty years ago.

In 1856 the writer saw landed at San Francisco from a sailing vessel seven Japanese. They were attired in the garb then common to their country—a sort of blue dungaree, such as overalls are made of, loosely cut, with seats that bagged nearly to their knees. Their long hair was done up in a mass on top of their heads, and held in place by miniature daggers, something like ladies' hat-pins of the present day, the rank of the wearer being designated by the number of daggers in his head-dress. These seven men were the first Japanese minister and his staff, on their way to Washington to establish there an embassy.

In 1847 California was purchased from the Mexican government by the United States for \$5,000,000. Before the gold excitement the Fathers at the Missions were the owners of large herds of cattle and milch cows, ponies, sheep and hogs. When the rush of Anglo-Saxons came the herds were rapidly depleted, being taken for consumption, and in the course of two or three years almost the last hoof had been parted with, and the Fathers turned their attention to tilling the vast properties they had acquired by grants from the Mexicans.

The story of how gold was discovered in 1848 has often been told, but it will bear repetition here. An enterprising Swiss named John A. Sutter, during the winter of 1847-8, started to erect a sawmill in a valley called Coloma, some 60 miles east of Sacramento City. The contractor was a man named James W. Marshall. One day, while digging a tail race for the water Marshall noticed a few yellow particles in the sand. He gathered some of the particles and at once became satisfied of their nature and value. He hurried to Sutter and threw an ounce of gold on the table before him. The two agreed to keep the dis-

covery a secret, and share in the profits; but their operations were observed by a Mormon laborer, who speedily became as wise as themselves. He told others in the neighborhood, and everybody left his regular employment and began to search for the precious metal. The news was sent abroad. The valley soon swarmed with diggers, and within a few days after the Mormon gave wings to the discovery twelve hundred men were at work in the neighborhood. Over all California the excitement was prodigious. Spaniards, Americans and foreigners were alike affected. The husband left his wife, the father his family; men deserted their masters, and these followed their servants—all turned toward Coloma.

Other streams and valleys were fanned to contain gold-bearing sands. Some claims, not so rich, yielded a competency in a month or a year. Some did not yield anything. Meanwhile the circle of excitement was widening. The Mexicans heard the tidings first, and came pouring into the diggings. The sturdy settlers from Oregon came next. These were followed by an immigration from the Sandwich Islands and Chili. Before long China sent forward thousands from her teeming multitude, and Australia (before long herself to be in the throes of a gold excitement), added her quota to the inflowing tide.

In the fall of 1848 the news reached the Eastern States of Canada. It was received with incredulity at first, but later reports confirmed the first intelligence, and both countries became infected with the fever. The writer was a very small boy in 1849, but he well remembers the excitement with which the news was received. Thousands abandoned their homes and their callings and hastened toward the new Eldorado. In some localities whole neighborhoods were deserted by their male population. In many cases businesses and real property and household goods were disposed of at a sacrifice, and wives and children accompanied their husbands and parents to California. Every craft in the shape of a vessel was chartered to carry passengers and goods around the Horn or to the Isthmus by Panama. Worn-out steamers and worm-eaten sailers that were deemed so unseaworthy as to be no longer safe for inland navigation, were sent to sea with crowds of living and dead freight. Some of these "tubs" went down before the first gale and those on board were heard of no more. Others ran short of water and food, and put in at South American ports, where they were condemned. Still others managed to weather the storm, and after long passages landed their passengers and cargoes at San Francisco. Death was not infrequent on board the "floating coffins," as they were not inaptly termed in derision, and many the bonnie lad or lassie who had left home a few weeks before full of hope and courage, in quest of a fortune, succumbed to the privations incident to a long sea voyage, such as bad food, impure water, and scurvy.

On some of these ships cholera broke out, and the few who survived reached port in an emaciated condition which challenged the pity of all beholders.

The gold-seekers who came by way of Panama suffered nearly as much as those who chose the ocean route. After reaching the port of Colon on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus they were compelled to either walk across the narrow neck to the Pacific ocean or hire mules for the journey. Having left New York with the assurance that they would find a steamer to take them to San Francisco, upon reaching Panama they found no means provided for their further transportation, and they remained huddled together in the unclean city until the Chagres fever broke out among them and they died like flies caught on a sheet of tanglefoot paper. Some who took passage by the Panama route were nearly a year in reaching their destination, and were then in no condition to earn a livelihood.

But the parties that suffered most were those who traveled by the overland route, with teams and wagons and supplies. On their way across the Plains they were exposed to the attacks of the Indians, and in one instance at least to a massacre by Mormons, in revenge for the death of Apostle Joseph Smith, founder of the sect, who was killed while attempting to escape from prison. In this massacre one hundred and fourteen men, women and children were sacrificed. The order from the heads of the church were to spare none over one year of age, and the order was strictly obeyed.

Privation proved a harder enemy to contend with than the Indians and Mormons. When the provisions were exhausted and the last mule or horse had been devoured the wretched immigrants began to feed on the bodies of their companions, two of whom (Indian guides) a party of whites killed and ate. A man named Kiesburg was charged with committing many murders to enable him to gratify this new and unnatural propensity. He was marked for destruction, but somehow escaped, and before long all were glad to partake of the horrid mess.

Snow had begun to fall early in the mountains, and many died raving mad and were eaten by their late comrades. By great exertions a message of their sad condition reached the settlements, and relief parties were sent out with provisions. A wife was found eating a portion of her husband, a daughter a father, a mother that of her children, children that of father and mother. Language cannot describe the awful change that a few weeks of dire suffering had wrought in the minds of the piteous beings (I quote here from the California Star). Some of the sufferers died, and were immediately eaten. Some sank into the arms of death cursing God for their miserable fate, while the last whisperings of others were