

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

Discovery of Californian Gold. § 1. The existence of rich and extensive gold mines in California was discovered by James W. Marshall, an American citizen and a native of New Jersey, on the nineteenth of January, 1848. Gold had, previous to that time, been found, but in places where the mines were not extensive; their production was scarcely known to commerce, and their working, after long years, led to no important results. Marshall's discovery speedily and directly exercised an influence that was felt throughout the world, and gave a new life to trade and industry in Europe and America.

Drake's Report. § 2. The first published report of gold in California, is in Hakluyt's account of Sir Francis Drake's visit to this coast in 1579. That voyager entered a bay, about latitude thirty-eight degrees, supposed to be the one now called "Drake's Bay," twenty miles north-westward from the mouth of San Francisco Bay. If not the former, it certainly was the latter bay. The historian of the voyage says: "There is no part of the earth here to be taken up wherein there is not a reasonable quantity of gold or silver." There is no statement that any of Drake's men penetrated into the interior, or made any search for these metals, or obtained any specimens of them; and since neither gold nor silver is found in the loose earth at either Drake's Bay or San Francisco Bay, we are justified in presuming the statement to be an impudent lie, written for the purposes of making the voyage appear important, giving interest to the narrative, and imposing on the ignorant and credulous.