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CHAPTER XVI.

A New Era in California—War with the United States—Various Battles—Heroism of the Americans—Conquest—Discovery of Gold—Brilliant Hopes—On the Pacific again—Long Tom Finishes his Yarn—Speculations on the Future of California—The Prisoners—Poor Graham—Home and my Wife—Reflections.

Soon after this commenced a new era in the history of California. In 1845 a rupture occurred between the United States and Mexico. Commodore Sloat of the Pacific Squadron, hearing of the commencement of hostilities on the Rio Grande, immediately seized Monterey, hoisted the Star Spangled Banner from the Custom House, and issued a proclamation of war to the people of the Californias.

It would be foreign from our purpose to give a detailed history of this war. The principal incidents are doubtless still fresh in the memory of most of our readers. Suffice it to say, that Commodore Stockton, General Kearney, Colonel Fremont, Captains Barrows and Thompson, and hosts of others, did honor to the flag of their country by their gallant achievements. At the Rio San Gabriel, and on the plains of Meza, decisive battles were fought against overwhelming odds, when victory, as usual, perched upon the American banner, with a loss of only one killed and thirteen wounded in the two fights. Various other engagements occurred, the history of all of which will be found in other volumes.

One incident will illustrate the daring and heroic character of the men engaged in that glorious struggle. At