

a singular botany, including the most splendid known group of coniferous trees, of which half a dozen species grow to be more than 250 feet high, and one species that reached a height of 450 feet and a diameter of 40 feet in the trunk; by a peculiar zoology, composed almost of animals found only on the coast, and including the largest bird north of the Equator [the Californian vulture], the largest and most formidable quadruped of the continent [the grizzly bear]; by the importation in early years of all articles of food, and then by the speedy development of agriculture, until her wheat and wine have gone to the farthest cities in search of buyers, and until her markets are unrivalled in the variety and magnificence of home-grown fruits; by the largest crop of grain and the largest specimens of fruits and vegetables on record; by a society where for years there was not one woman to a score of men, and where all the men were in the bloom of manhood; by the first large migration of Eastern Asiatics from their own continent; by the first settlement of Chinamen among white men; by the entire lack of mendicants [?], paupers [?], and almshouses; by the rapid fluctuations of trade; by the accumulation of wealth in the hands of men, most of whom came to the country poor; by the practice—universal in early years—of going armed; by the multitude of deadly affrays and extra constitutional courts [vigilance committees], which functionaries punished villains with immediate execution, and sometimes proceeded with a gravity and slow moderation that might become the most august tribunals. I write of California while she is still youthful and full of marvels; while her population is still unsettled; while her business is still fluctuating, her wages high, her gold abundant, and her birth still fresh in the memory of men and women who are yet youthful: and I write of her while she still offers a wide field for the adventurous, the enterprising, and the young, who have life before them, and wish to commence it where they may have the freest career, in full sight of the greatest reward of success, and with the fewer chances of failure."

These words are almost a synopsis of the history and resources of the State, and I need only supplement them with a few particulars regarding some of the more interesting, though, indeed, to any one of the points many chapters could be pleasantly devoted. The name California—"Las Californias"—was originally applied by the Spaniards to the country north of Mexico for a rather indefinite extent, but is now confined simply to the American State of that name annexed to the Great Republic in 1848, though not formally admitted as a State until 1850. "Baja," or Lower "California," is the peninsula from Cape St. Lucas to the boundary between the United States and Mexico, and is a part of Mexico. Its breadth varies, and its area is believed to be not more than about 50,000 square miles. The northern and southern extremities of this peninsula, according to Mr. Gabb, consist chiefly of granite rocks and high ranges. Between the spurs of these mountains are numerous small valleys, many of them well watered and fertile. Here, also, are situated the principal mines of the peninsula, which are still worked with success, and in 1867 were producing silver to the extent of 20,000 dollars per month. The middle section is made up of a mountain range called the Sierra Gigantea, or del Gigante, the peaks of which attain an elevation of from 3,000 to 4,000 feet. The settlements are confined to the eastern part of this range, while along the coast are numerous small valleys, with good harbours close by. These spots are fertile, and well adapted for the growth of tropical products. Most, however, of the peninsula is, owing to the extreme dryness of the climate, barren and forbidding in the extreme.