

overlooking a broad, peaceful, nearly land-locked sheet of water, dotted with green isles inhabited only by the seals and sea lions, with one voice they exclaimed: "Surely this must be the bay of San Francisco."

Here, during the very year which witnessed the signing of the Declaration of Independence on the eastern border of our continent, was planted the presidio of San Francisco, and near the Golden Gate a fort was erected. The present city began its growth at a little indentation of the coast three miles from this point, and the first name it received was the significant one of Yerba Buena — good herbs or grass. At the time when Mexico was throwing off the yoke of Spain, the soldiers of the presidio were faithful to their country even though, owing to the sad state of the finances of the home government, they received no wages.

In 1839 Yerba Buena was laid out as a city; a public plaza being first measured off, the remainder of the level ground was utilized as building lots and was divided by streets. In July, 1846, when the American flag was first given to the breeze on the plaza, there were probably two hundred inhabitants in the picturesque little village; but before the month ended the population was increased by a colony of Mormons from New York, who were a most diligent, progressive set of men, and among other benefits bestowed upon the little town its first newspaper. In January, 1847, Yerba Buena was transformed into San Francisco by order of the American alcalde, and the discovery of gold the next year wrought a complete transformation in San Francisco as well as in almost every other part of California. Thither flocked men of every race and clime on their way to the gold fields, and thither they returned on their way to their homes, some jubilant with their quota of the precious golden ore, and others bearing only disappointed hopes. But enough remained in the city to give it a population of twenty-five thousand by the end of 1849. Prices in the little town went up with a bound; one two-story house fronting on the plaza rented for \$120,000 a year, while another of extremely small dimensions was hired for the exorbitant sum of \$3000 a month. Carpenters who were getting twelve dollars a day struck for sixteen; forty dollars was the price of either a barrel of flour or a pair of boots; a small loaf of bread cost fifty cents and a hard boiled egg a dollar. The only currency was gold dust, which was rated at \$16 per ounce, and was weighed out in scales which were to be found at every place of business.

At this period in San Francisco the arrival of the mail steamer, which occurred two or three times a month, was among the most important and exciting of events. The voluntary exiles who made up the principal part