

CALIFORNIA: A SCENE IN THE GOLD REGION.

Soon after the Mexican revolution, Americans began to cross the mountain barriers of the interior, and to settle amidst the uplands of California. In 1846 war broke out between the United States and Mexico, and in 1847 California became American territory.

In December 1847, some labourers constructing a ditch near Sacramento discovered some flakes of gold. Shortly after, a gentleman, taking an early walk among the hills around Sonora, struck his foot against a stone, and turning to look at it, found a piece of quartz richly coated over with gold. Market-gardeners, who had occupied apparently valueless tracts for the purpose of cabbage-growing, found themselves in the midst of the richest diggings. The powerful influence of gold over the human mind soon manifested itself in the numerous adventurers, who, with marvellous rapidity, congregated on the Californian shore. In less than two years 200,000 persons had gathered there from all parts of the earth—Cornish miners, Germans, Italians, Frenchmen, Americans in every variety, and even Chinese.

The diggings are thus described by Mr. Borthwick:—"A long straggling street of clapboard houses and log-cabins, built in a hollow at the side of a creek, and surrounded by high and steep hills, points out the centre of existing effort. Along the whole length of the creek were parties of miners, some laying into it with picks, some shovelling the dirt into the 'long toms,' or with long-handled shovels washing the dirt thrown in, and throwing out the stones; while others were working pumps or baling water out of the holes with buckets. There was a continual noise and clatter, as mud, stones, and water were thrown in all directions; and the men, dressed in ragged clothes and big boots, wielding picks and shovels, and rolling rocks about, were all working as if for their lives, with a will and a degree of energy not usually seen among labouring men."

It is remarkable, that throughout the long period during which Romish priests exercised throughout the land a dominant power, the treasures remained concealed. Had they then been discovered, what welcome aid would they have afforded to the world-wide extension of Romish proselytism; but they were reserved for other hands.