

six feet above the ground is fifty feet in circumference. One cut down in the Calaveras Grove—(the cutting down is now prohibited by a State law)—measured six feet above the ground, without the bark, twenty-four feet one and a half inches, and, judging from the rings, was 1,300 years old—or, in other words, it was a very tiny bush at the same time the Roman Empire was beginning to fall in pieces. These trees being now a common sight for all visitors to make a pilgrimage to, they have received—at least, in the Mariposa Grove—all manner of fanciful names, chiefly in honour of passing heroes, which frequently in their turn absurdly give place to other favourites of the hour. The stump of one of them which was cut down has now a house built over it, and is used as a ball-room. We have figured one of these trees at page 277. It is known as the "Mother of the Forest," there being also a father. It is 305 feet in height, and 63 in circumference. The bark has been stripped off for 121 feet. The wood of the big tree is of little value, even were it available, but its close ally, the redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), is extensively used for lumber. This species is found in forests on a narrow belt, 300 miles in length, along the coast, in silurian soil, but it does not cross the Oregon boundary, nor go south of the Bay of Monterey.\* It is possible that most of the trees of this species are little, if any, smaller than some of those of the *Sequoia sempervirens*. I have seen one not far from Crescent City, which had been hollowed out by fire as it lay on the ground, leaving only the fire and a thin shell. A laden mule-train is said to have passed through, nor need the fact be doubted. I have myself seen an elk, or wapiti, hard pressed, take refuge in the angle formed by two fallen trees of this species, and yet fail to leap over them when the hunters approached it, the height being too great for it. The geysers, the hot springs, and a score of other remarkable though not exclusive features of California, might also be cited among its wonders. It is necessary, however, for us now to devote some space to the Californian mines, and, what is even more interesting, the miners themselves.

\* For some curious speculations regarding these trees, and botanical history of California generally, see Professor Asa Gray, in "Annals of Natural History," Vol. xi., 4th series, p. 52 (1873).