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THE
City of the Golden Gate

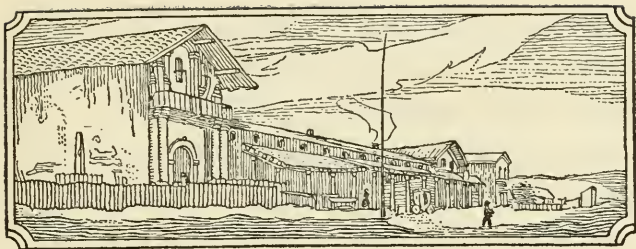
A DESCRIPTION OF SAN FRANCISCO IN
1875

WRITTEN BY
SAMUEL WILLIAMS



SAN FRANCISCO
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THE CITY OF THE GOLDEN GATE

A DESCRIPTION OF SAN FRANCISCO IN

1875

MARVELOUS has been the growth of San Francisco. Its story reads like a chapter from the "Arabian Nights." Yesterday a dreary waste of sand—today a city of a quarter of a million souls, with an aggregate wealth of five hundred millions. The men who laid its foundations—who were present at its birth and christening—are hardly past the prime of life.

Never was there a more unsightly spot for a city. A long ragged peninsula, mottled with mammoth sand dunes, over which swept the sharp winds and chilling fogs of summer, and pitiless storms of winter; isolated from the main-land, barren, verdureless, horrid to the eye, with the broad Pacific dashing its waves against it on one side, and a stormy inland

sea beating upon it on the other—no wonder the heart of the pioneer sunk within him as he gazed upon the inhospitable wilds for the first time. It was no less uninviting in its social aspect. An old church, and a cluster of adobe huts at the Mission; a lot of wretched rookeries at the Presidio; a few hide and tallow warehouses on the beach—that was all. The population was made up of Greasers, Digger Indians, a few white traders, deserters from whale ships, and adventurers of no nationality in particular, the whole numbering a few hundred souls. Its very name, “YERBA BUENA,” was strange to American ears.

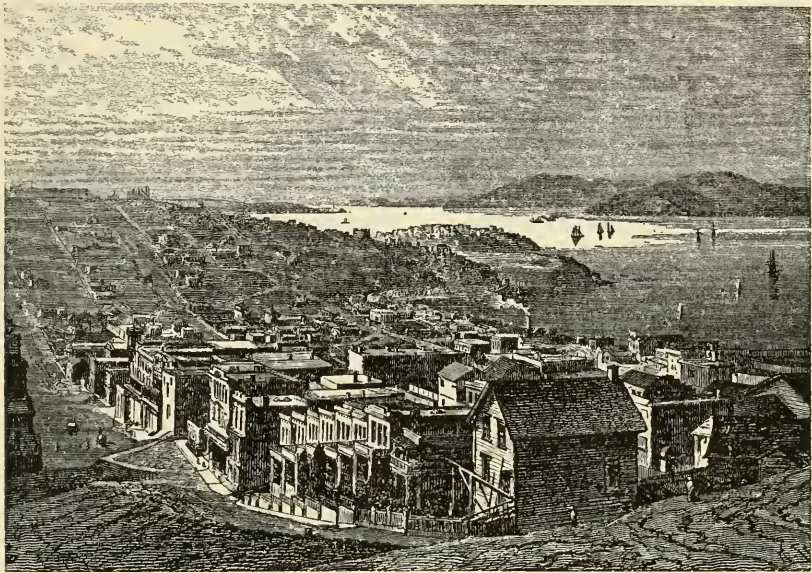
Yet it was manifest to the sharp observer that nature had intended the place for a great city. Nearly twenty years before the first Argonaut had planted his foot upon its site, Captain Bonneville, the famous explorer, predicted that here would rise one of the great marts of commerce and naval stations of the world. The Bay of San Francisco is a vast inland sea. It has an extreme length of over seventy miles, a mean width of ten miles, and a circumference—if we include San Pablo and Suisun bays, which are properly its arms—of two hundred and fifty-six miles. Within the circle of its deep water all the navies of the world could safely ride at anchor, for

the mighty portals of the Golden Gate protect it against the surf of the Pacific. It is as picturesque as it is grand. A noble amphitheater of hills, Grecian in form and contour, exquisitely varied in play of light and shadow, encircles it. It is dotted with islands and margined with sunny slopes; two vast rivers, the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, bring their tribute of water to it, and innumerable minor streams — children of the valley and the mountain — discharge their crystal treasures into its bosom. It is the home of the sea-gull and the pelican, the porpoise and sturgeon. Even the shark, the sea-lion and the devil-fish not infrequently visit its deeper recesses.

The stranger who landed in San Francisco in 1849 beheld a unique spectacle. He found men living, for the most part, in tents and shanties. There were few adventurers of the baser sort, and they were speedily exterminated or expelled. The refining influence of woman was almost entirely wanting, yet nowhere was true woman held in profounder respect. Life and property were far more secure than in older communities. Locks and bars were unknown. Men trusted their all to those who were strangers but a few hours before. There were virtually no written laws, but a “higher law” of honor

and probity controlled the actions of the people. There was not a school; not a Protestant church; but men who left Christian homes brought their Bibles with them, and the sweet influences of virtuous home example protected them from vicious courses. Never, perhaps, in a community made up of such heterogeneous elements, attracted by love of adventure and the thirst for gold, were there so few bad men.

But this condition of things did not last long. The fame of the gold discovery attracted a horde of adventurers from all parts of the world. Ruffians and cut-throats, thieves and gamblers, from every land poured in, a foul and fetid stream, tainting the air and polluting the soil. Convicts from Australia; the scum of European cities; "bruisers" from New York and "plug uglies" from Philadelphia; desperadoes from Central and South America; pariahs from India and outcasts from the South Sea Islands, swooped down, a hideous brood, upon the infant city. The effect was soon visible. Crime of almost every conceivable grade ran riot. Gambling dens monopolized the heart of the town. Murderers walked about the streets unchallenged in midday. Leading citizens were murdered in cold blood in their places of busi-



THE GOLDEN GATE

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ness, or on their way home at night. No man's life, no man's property, was safe. Then followed the uprising of the people—the punishment of the principal offenders, sharp, quick, terrible—without the formula of legal proceedings—and the dispersion and flight of more notorious ruffians. A short reign of peace and order, then a repetition in a new and perhaps more dangerous form, of the disorders of 1850 and '51. The era of vulgar ruffianism followed that of municipal corruption. The thieves and cut-throats, intrenching themselves within the precincts of the City Hall, made war upon the life of the community. Again the people rose in righteous anger, and applied the heroic treatment to local abuses. Instead of suspending the Tweeds and Connollys of 1856 from office, they suspended them from second story windows. The remedy was harsh, but it was effective; it was extra-judicial, but it brought order out of anarchy. The Vigilance Committee, having fulfilled its mission, dissolved never to re-appear. The power it had so terribly yet discreetly wielded, passed peacefully into the People's Party, to be exercised through constitutional channels, to be used for the popular good. Henceforward San Francisco became one of the most quiet, law-abiding, well-

governed cities in the world. Various efforts to establish corrupt rings have since been made, but thanks to a vigilant press and a public opinion with which it is still dangerous to trifle, they have failed. Its rulers have been, with few exceptions, able and upright, identified with its best interests, careful of its good name and proud of the distinction of having proved true to their trusts. The machinery of our local government is simple. The power rests almost absolutely in a single body—the Board of Supervisors. The only direct check upon its actions is the veto of the Mayor. A corrupt board could inflict incalculable injury upon the city; yet, so potent is the corrective force of public opinion, so jealous are these people of their rights, so quick to punish unfaithful public servants, that few iniquitous jobs have ever been consummated.

The pioneer loves to dwell on the changes that have taken place in the physical aspect of the city. He will tell you that the greater part of the business portion of the town has been reclaimed from the sea; that where mighty warehouses now stand ships rode at anchor; that where the Babel of commerce roars the loudest, the peaceful crab had his home and the festive dolphin disported; that the tide swashed

against the sandy shore on the present line of Montgomery street; that where now stands the Cosmopolitan hotel, towered a sand-hill seventy feet high; that the southern limit of the city was Bush street; that all beyond from the junction of Montgomery and Market to the ocean was a howling wilderness.

The old landmarks—pride of the pioneer—have nearly all disappeared. The wooden shanty, the dingy adobe hut, the crazy rookery on piles, have given place to palatial structures; and San Francisco is rapidly taking rank architecturally with the great cities of the world. Front and Battery and Sansome are already fine business streets; Kearny, Montgomery, California, and the lower part of Market suggest a town a hundred years old. Some of the public and private buildings are among the most elegant and costly in the country.

The new City Hall, on the site of an old burial-ground, will, when completed, cost at least five millions of dollars. The new Mint, on the corner of Fifth and Mission, with its splendid front of Corinthian columns, is one of the finest buildings in America, and has cost the Government about two millions of dollars.

The Palace Hotel, to be opened in September, will

be the largest establishment of the kind in the world; it will accommodate twelve hundred guests, and cost between three and four million dollars. All its furniture will be not only of California manufacture, but of California material. It will have three immense inner courts, roofed with glass, a marble-tiled promenade, and a tropical garden with exotic plants; it will have a music pavilion and a band in constant attendance. To run this mammoth caravansary will require over three hundred and fifty people.

Among other noticeable buildings are the new Custom House, the Nevada Block, the Safe and Deposit Block, the Occidental, Lick and Grand Hotels, and the Railroad Block, corner of Fourth and Townsend. Many of the private residences are very large, rich and elaborate. The stranger, riding along Bush, Pine, Sutter, Post streets, and Van Ness Avenue, will find it difficult to realize that he is in a city only a quarter of a century old. But he will also be struck with the absence of architectural unity. Hardly any two mansions are exactly alike. The "orders" are fearfully and wonderfully mixed. He will find Corinthian, Gothic, Doric, Byzantine, huddled together in a chaotic jumble of wood and stone, and brick and iron; yet there is a sort of family likeness running

through all—an architectural kinship that is essentially Californian. There is the ubiquitous bay window (the San Franciscan has learned that sunlight makes the doctor's visits rare), and the ambitious Mansard roof, and the elaborate cornices—terror of timid pedestrians in earthquake times—and the somewhat “loud” front entrance. Entering a rich man's house, he will find luxury carried to the utmost limit of the possible; princely halls, and dazzling drawing rooms; the floors covered with richest carpets; the walls adorned with costly paintings—the splendors of the East and West combined. An invited guest, he will find a royal hospitality dispensed, and sit down to dinners that would tempt an anchorite to forget his vows of abstinence; for these people are generous livers.

A few facts show the vigor with which this young metropolis has been pushing its way to the front rank of American cities. In 1849 its population was 2,000; in 1850 it was 20,000; in 1860 it was 56,000; in 1870 it was 149,000; in 1874 it was 200,000. Now, it is about 230,000, and, at the present ratio of growth, in 1880 it will be 369,000. Never has the growth been as rapid as now. Over two thousand buildings have been erected within the past twelve

months, while Oakland, Alameda, San Rafael, and other suburbs, have been advancing with unexampled rapidity.

The growth of commerce has nearly kept pace with the growth of population. San Francisco is today the third city in the Union, measured by the aggregate of its importations and exportations. The early records of the Custom House were destroyed by fire, and we have no data prior to 1854, when the appraised value of imports was only \$5,000,000; in 1864 it was nearly \$11,000,000; in 1869 it was \$16,000,000; in 1874 it was nearly \$29,000,000. A comparison of tonnage will perhaps give a better idea of the growth of the business of the port. In 1854 it was only 194,000; in 1874 it was 662,000. A notable feature of the commercial development of the city is the Oriental trade. Until 1869 it was comparatively of little importance—the aggregate tonnage from the Orient for that year being 65,752; but with the inauguration of steamship service it received a sudden impetus, swelling-up in 1874 to 124,000 tons. And this trade is only in its infancy. The establishment of steam communication with the Australian provinces promises great results. In fact as “all roads lead to Rome,” so all the streams



STARR KING'S CHURCH

of commerce from the vast countries on the western and eastern shores of the Pacific—from the groups of islands lying between here and Australasia—flow by an inevitable law of gravitation to this Western emporium to fertilize and aggrandize it. It could not escape its magnificent destiny if it would. It has greatness literally thrust upon it. How far the men now on the stage will be able to utilize their opportunities is a problem not yet quite solved.

The accumulation of wealth has been very rapid. The aggregate personal and real estate of the city may be safely estimated at \$500,000,000. The banking capital amounts to \$84,000,000; there are more than sixty millionaires. The United States Branch Mint coined during 1874 over \$27,000,000. The total coinage from 1854 to the close of 1874 was about \$377,329,000, while the aggregate gold product of California, from 1848 to the present time, was about \$990,000,000. This vast volume of the precious metals has not passed into the general current of the world's circulating medium without leaving its influence on the Golden State. San Francisco is largely, more largely than many of our people are willing to confess, the child of the mines. They gave it its first start; they have generously, though not

exclusively nourished it ever since. They have called into existence a very large manufacturing interest, giving employment to tens of thousands of men. They have stimulated every branch of trade and internal commerce, quickened every pulse of industrial life. Nearly all our finest buildings have been erected out of the profits of mining enterprises. Every pound of ore that is taken out of the earth, from Alaska to Arizona, pays tribute here. A man may make his fortune in the desert of Nevada or Idaho, but he is pretty sure to spend it in San Francisco.

California street is the speculator's paradise, or perdition. Here the bulls bellow, and the bears growl their loudest. Here the crowd of stock-jobbers congregate, and the operators put up their "little games." Fortunes are made, or lost in a day. A happy turn in stocks makes a millionaire of the man who yesterday could not get trusted for a pair of boots. Nowhere is the temptation to gamble so strong, or the chances of gain or loss so great, as in mines. Nature herself turns gamester and shuffles the cards to suit herself. A single blow of the pick may reveal millions, where before was seen nothing but barren earth; a "horse," a streak of porphyry, a fire, a flood, a cave, may make the richest mine on the Comstock

unproductive for months. Four years ago the Crown Point and Belcher mines were regarded as worthless. The stock of the former went begging in the market at three dollars a share; the stock of the latter was without buyers at any price. But a great "bonanza" stretching across both mines was discovered, and in a few months Belcher and Crown Point rushed up to \$1,800 a share. Since then these mines have produced nearly \$45,000,000 of bullion and two United States Senators. Two years ago the Consolidated Virginia mine was denounced on the street as a "wild cat;" now its value is modestly estimated at \$150,000,000; and the California mine, which a few months ago was hardly known, is likely to have even a greater future. With such marvelous revelations of the hidden riches of the earth, it is not surprising that these mercurial people occasionally lose their heads, abandon temporarily the more conservative channels of business, and seek their fortune on the street. The sales of the Stock Board for 1873 aggregated over \$146,000,000, and for 1874, over \$260,000,000; in addition to this, there were sales to the amount of several millions in the "Little Board" and on the street of which no record is kept. A seat in the Board cannot be bought today

for less than \$25,000. But a bonanza with "millions in it" is not struck every week. Stocks may "boom" today, but droop tomorrow, and with the crash come remorse and repentance, heartache and disgust. Then California street curses its fate, puts on sackcloth and ashes and resolves to sin no more. The good resolution lasts till the next stock-rise, when the old appetite returns, and the speculative debauch is renewed. To all this there is one compensating good: without the speculations of the street and the grinding assessments of the managers, the vast explorations in the mysterious caverns of the earth, resulting in the discovery of great ore bodies in mines abandoned by less energetic or less wealthy prospectors, would not be prosecuted to the extent they have been.

Wealth is being turned to worthier channels—dedicated to nobler uses. The example of James Lick who, in spite of the revocation of the original Trust, emphasizes his intention to give a fortune of several millions to public objects, will not be barren of results. Already there are rumors in the air of embryo bequests to Education, Art, Science; colossal schemes of benefaction are slowly but surely maturing.

San Francisco is probably the most cosmopolitan



JAMES LICK

city of its size in the world. Nowhere else are witnessed the fusing of so many races, the juxtaposition of so many nationalities, the Babel of so many tongues. Every country on the globe, every state and principality, almost every island of the sea, finds here its representative. Your next-door neighbor may be a native of Central Asia. Your *vis-à-vis* at the restaurant table may have been reared in New Zealand; the man who does your washing may have been born under the shadow of the great wall of China; the man who waits on you at table may be a lascar from the East Indies. If you go to the theatre, you may find sitting next to you a lady from the Sandwich Islands; if you go to the Opera, you may hear, in the pauses of the music, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Swedish, Modern Greek, spoken by people dressed in the most scrupulous evening costume. If you take a ride in the horse-cars, you may find yourself wedged in between a parson from Massachusetts and a parsee from Hindostan; if you go to the bank, you may be jostled by a gentleman from Damascus, or a prince of the Society Islands. In three minutes' walk from your place of business, you enter an Oriental city—are surrounded by the symbols of a civilization older than that of the Pha-

raohs. If you are tired of French or American cookery, you may feast on the royal delicacies of bird's-nest soup, shark's fin, and fricasseed puppies. If you are fond of the drama, you may vary your amusements by witnessing a play spoken in the language of Confucius, performed with all the appointments of the barbaric stage. You will find thousands listening on Sabbath to the Christian Gospel, and thousands listening to the dogmas of Buddha, and kneeling at the shrine of Joss.

San Francisco is a generous patron of education. Its public school buildings compare favorably with those of Eastern cities; its teachers are generally able and efficient, and better paid than in any other place in the world. The average yearly salary is \$1,033, while in Boston it is \$940, and in Chicago and St. Louis it is less than \$800. Since the organization of our city government, we have spent over \$6,000,000 for school development, and between \$200,000 and \$300,000 will be put into new school buildings during the current year. About 21 per cent of the municipal revenue is devoted to educational purposes; in Chicago only 16 per cent goes to the schools, and in Boston only 18 per cent. The average attendance at public schools is over 57 per

cent of all the children between six and seventeen, and in Chicago, only 33 per cent.

The condition of the working classes is exceptionally prosperous. Labor is more remunerative here than in any other city of the Union. Strikes are rare. There are over fifty million dollars deposited in our Savings Banks—more than twice as much as in Chicago or St. Louis, which have nearly double the population. There were on the 30th of June, 1874, fifty six thousand depositors in these institutions, over one-fourth the entire population: a larger percentage than in any city on the globe. From these vast accumulations of the people's savings over two millions of dollars were paid out in dividends last year. A very large proportion of our mechanics own their homes. The curse of tenement-houses is unknown. The cost of fuel is nominal, for fires, even in the coldest days, are rather a luxury than a necessity. The habits of our people are extravagant, and it costs perhaps quite as much to live here as in most Eastern cities; but the mere necessaries of life—bread, fruit and vegetables, are very cheap. Our markets supply almost every conceivable want of hungry humanity. The products of every clime are laid in profusion at our doors. There is not a day

in the year when one may not enjoy the luxuries of green peas, fresh tomatoes, celery and cauliflower. Even strawberries may be a perennial delight.

San Francisco is famed for its restaurants. In no city in America are these establishments so numerous in proportion to the population. They number between two and three hundred, and it is safe to say that at least thirty thousand people take their meals at them. They are of all grades and prices—from the “Poodle Dog,” Martin’s and the Maison Dorée, where a meal costs from \$1.50 to \$20—down to the Miners’ Restaurant, where it costs only forty cents. Between these extremes are a large number of French, German and Italian restaurants where one may get a royal breakfast for half a dollar, a lunch for twenty-five cents, and a dinner, including claret, for seventy-five cents, *a la carte*. A tenderloin steak (and there is no better beef in the world than here), potatoes, bread and butter, and a cup of coffee will cost fifty cents; a lamb chop, potatoes, bread and butter, and coffee, twenty-five cents; salmon, bread and butter, and coffee, twenty-five cents; an omelet or eggs boiled, scrambled or fried, with coffee, and bread and butter, thirty-five

cents. A grade lower down, but in places cleanly and entirely respectable, one gets three dishes for twenty-five cents, and may find quite a decent meal for twenty to thirty cents.

San Francisco is the elysium of "bummers." Nowhere else can a worthless fellow, too lazy to work, too cowardly to steal, get on so well. The climate befriends him, for he can sleep out of doors four-fifths of the year, and the free lunch opens to him boundless vistas of carnal delights. He can gorge himself daily for a nominal sum; get a dinner that a king might envy for fifty cents. There are two classes of saloons where these midday repasts are furnished—"two bit" places and "one bit" places. In the first he gets a drink and a meal; in the second a drink and a meal of inferior quality. He pays for the drink (twenty-five or fifteen cents, according to the grade of the place), and gets his meal for nothing. This consists, in the better class of establishments, of soup, boiled salmon, roast beef of the best quality, bread and butter, potatoes, tomatoes, crackers and cheese. Many of these places are fitted up in a style of almost Oriental grandeur. A stranger entering one of them casually, might labor under the delusion that he had found his way, by mistake,

to the *salon* of a San Francisco millionaire. He would find immense mirrors reaching from floor to ceiling; carpets of the finest texture and the most exquisite patterns; luxurious lounges, sofas, and arm-chairs; massive tables covered with papers and periodicals; the walls embellished with expensive paintings. A large picture which had adorned a famous drinking and free-lunch house was sold the other day for \$12,500. Some of the keepers are men of education and culture. One is an art critic of high local repute, who has written a book, and a very readable one, of San Francisco reminiscences.

San Francisco has rather more than her share of eccentric characters. Foremost among these is "Emperor Norton," a harmless creature, who firmly believes that he is the legitimate sovereign of the United States and Mexico; issues frequent pronunciamientos; exacts tribute from such citizens as humor his delusion; spends his days walking about the streets, his evenings at the theater, and his nights at a cheap lodging-house. He has the run of the hotel reading-rooms, appears on public occasions in tattered regalia, visits the different churches to see that heresies dangerous to the peace of the Empire are not promulgated, calls at the newspaper offices to warn the con-

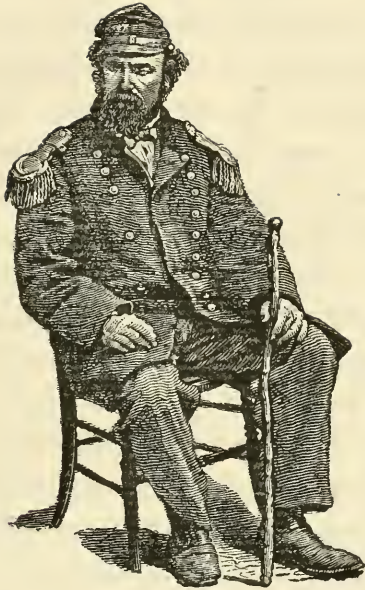
ductors against the consequences of treasonable utterances—in short, is up early and late regulating the affairs of the world in general, and the city and state in particular.

A familiar figure for many years was the “Gutter Snipe.” His shoulders were covered all seasons with an old white oil-cloth cape. He went about the streets head down, rummaging among the gutters, picking up bits of vegetables and fruit, wiping the dirt off with his sleeve, and eating them. He never spoke to any one, never looked at any one, would accept no food or money. He slept in a hole in the sand-hills. He was not a sightly object to look at, and one day a fastidious policeman “took him in charge;” a commission of lunacy sat upon him, and he was seen no more. Disappointment in love was his complaint.

Li Po Tai, the Herculean Chinese doctor, deserves a place among our local eccentrics. He is the prince of quacks and high priest of charlatans, who has amassed a large fortune by playing upon the credulity of the public, and has set up a Joss house (heathen temple). His rooms are thronged with visitors of all conditions and nationalities, who come to consult him touching their various ailments. His

diagnosis is direct and simple. The seat of all disorder is the liver, and it is to the correction of that rebellious organ that all his energies are directed. His medicines are something dreadful to think of; all the vile drugs of the celestial and the Christian pharmacopœia concentrated in potions (measured by the pint) so nauseating, so abhorrent to taste and smell, as to make one pause to consider which of the two evils is the greater, death or Dr. Li Po'Tai.

All San Franciscans know "Crisis." He is a sort of American howling dervish with a religious twist in his brain, who holds forth on the street corners, warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and predicting the speedy collapse of this wicked world of ours. He also peddles tracts written in atrocious English, and filled with most dismal prophecies. He wears a hat that looks as if it might have fallen overboard from the Ark and been drifting about ever since, and his general appearance is that of incorrigible seediness. There are many other odd characters which I have not time to sketch, among them Krause, the Poet Laureate of the Pave, who, like Homer, wanders about hawking hexameters, and the old fellow whose "Have your razors ground!" is familiar to the ears of all San Franciscans.



“EMPEROR NORTON”

The Hoodlum is a distinctive San Francisco product. Certainly no treatise on the resources of California would be complete that did not include him. He may be somewhat vaguely defined as a ruffian in embryo. Young in years, he is venerable in sin. He knows all the vices by heart. He drinks, gambles, runs after lewd women, sets buildings on fire, rifles the pockets of inebriated citizens going home in the small hours, parades the streets at night singing obscene songs, uttering horrid oaths, and striking terror to the heart of the timid generally. Occasionally he varies the programme of his evil doings by perpetrating a highway robbery, blowing open a safe, or braining an incautious critic of his conduct. One of his chief diversions, when he is in a more pleasant mood and at peace with the world at large, is stoning Chinamen. This he has reduced to a science. He has acquired a dexterity in the use of missiles, a delicacy and firmness of handling, an accuracy of aim and precision of movement, that seldom fail to bring the hated heathen down. According to the Hoodlum ethical code, to stone Chinamen is no sin. It is better than pastime—it is a work of righteousness.

The Hoodlum is of no particular nationality. He must simply be young and depraved. He must have

broken most of the commandments before he has got far into his teens. He may be the son of a beggar, he may be the son of a millionaire. There is no aristocracy in this republic of crime. The great mass of recruits are, of course, gathered from the lower classes, but "our best society" has bequeathed to the order some of its most brilliant representatives.

This sudden efflorescence of a sharply defined criminal class among boys — for the Hoodlum first appeared only three or four years ago — is somewhat alarming. It shows that there is a screw loose somewhere in our social mechanism. The selfish "Trades Unions," which virtually exclude apprentices from the mechanical pursuits, have been, I think, the principal cause of Hoodlumism. But there are other causes. Nowhere else are the restraints of parental authority so lax as here. A large portion of the people have no homes. They live, or rather they exist, in hotels, in boarding-houses, in lodging-houses, eat at restaurants, spend their days at their places of business, and their evenings at resorts of amusement. Their children are allowed to run wild, learn slang at their mother's breast, swear in pinafores, and prattle in the jargon of the street. The distracted parents, failing to govern them, give up the fight,

allow them to go out nights and have their own way in everything. From this point the road to ruin is so short and direct that it needs no guide-board to point the way. Hoodlumism is a disease so virulent, so rapid in its spread, that moral physicians are at their wit's end how to treat it. All sorts of remedies are proposed, but the most practical was that adopted by Mr. Ralston, the great banker, who, confronted by a combination of workmen who put up a "corner" on lathing for the Palace Hotel, cut the controversy short by setting several hundred boys to work to learn the business. This is the key to the whole case. Give the boys work, and Hoodlumism will disappear like a hateful excrescence.

The popular speech of San Francisco is strongly flavored with localisms. You hear on every side the jargon of the mining camp, the *patois* of the frontier. If a man fails in business he is "gone up a flume;" if he makes a lucky speculation he "has struck it rich;" if he dies he has "passed in his checks." Of a man of sound sense it is said "his head is level;" a good business is said to "pan out well." The genuine Californian never says he has made a fortunate investment, but he has "struck a lead;" never says he has gotten rich, but he has "made his

pile." A good dinner he calls a "square meal;" a cheat is always a "bilk;" getting at the real character of a man is "coming down to bed rock." "Clean-out," "freeze-out," are synonyms for rascally operations in business. When stocks are active they are said to be "booming;" a panic in the market is expressed by the term "more mud;" a man who is hurt in a mining transaction is "cinched;" a weak man is said to have "no sand in him;" a lying excuse is denounced as "too thin." In the slang vernacular, an eating-place is a "hash-house," a pretty waiter girl is a "beer-slinger," and a newspaper reporter an "ink-slinger."

For a young city, San Francisco is very much wedded to petty traditions. It clings to the "bit" with a death-like tenacity; clings to it against all reason and against its own interests. The "bit" is a mythical quantity. It is neither twelve and a-half cents, nor half of twenty-five; it is neither fifteen cents nor ten cents. If you buy a "bit's" worth and throw down twenty-five cents, you get ten cents back; if you offer the same ten cents in lieu of a "bit," you are looked upon as a mild sort of a swindler. And yet the "bit" is the standard of minimum monetary value. Of no fixed value itself, it is the measure of



“HAVE YOUR RAZORS GRIND!”

the value of a large share of what the people buy and sell. Until within the past few years five-cent pieces were nearly unknown, and are even yet looked upon with disdain by the more conservative residents. Some time ago the leading Bank tried the dangerous experiment of introducing pennies, and imported several hundred dollars' worth. They were scornfully rejected as unworthy the notice of broad-brained Californians, and speedily disappeared.

San Franciscans are remorseless critics. They pride themselves on their ability to form independent judgments, and their contempt for the opinions of the rest of mankind. This is shown in their treatment of distinguished dramatic and musical artists. They condemned Edwin Forrest after a single hearing, gave Madame Celeste the cold shoulder, and declined to go into raptures over Edwin Booth. But they gave Charles Kean a glorious welcome, took Boucicault to their bosoms, and went wild over "Dundreary." They opened their purses and their hearts to Parepa-Rosa, gave an ovation to Ole Bull, but permitted Wieniawski to discourse his divine harmonies to empty benches. Gough drew, but Josh Billings cracked his awful jokes on unsympathetic ears. Rev. Dr. Lord's historical lectures were crowd-

ed, but Charles Kingsley was generally voted a bore. They flocked to hear Hepworth Dixon the first night, declared that he would not do, and left him so severely alone, that he declined to make his appearance after the second attempt, and left in disgust.

The pioneers must not go unnoticed. Death has been cruelly busy among them of late, but they still constitute a large and perhaps dominant element of our population. Taken as a whole, the world has seldom known such brave and hardy spirits. They were the picked men of the age—the flower of the adventurous chivalry of the time. They found the country a wilderness, and made it blossom like a rose. They founded a great city, and added a rich, powerful and vigorous member to the commonwealth of States.

There is another, and, fortunately, smaller class of pioneer of whom little that is good can be spoken. So far as his influence is felt at all, it is obstructive. He is the Bourbon of California. Intellectually, he has no recognized status; morally, you must date him somewhere down in the Silurian age. He has no visible means of support. He is above the vulgar plane of labor. He lives wholly in the past. He dates the Creation of the world from the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mills, the Deluge from the great flood at

Sacramento. He went to sleep immediately after the collapse of the Vigilance Committee, and has been asleep ever since. The world has moved on; the city has increased in population sixfold; a new race of men has come upon the stage, but he knows it not. He sighs for the halcyon days when a man could get a dollar an hour for work; when the dulcet voice of the derringer was heard in the land at all hours; when one could settle his little disputes with his neighbor in Judge Lynch's Court of Last Resort. I asked a friend the other day where one of these incorrigibles could be found, as I wished to deliver a message to him.

"You will find him in the — — Saloon, in the midst of a lot of bummers, drinking out of the same old bottle that he drank from eighteen years ago."

"But how does he live?"

"Sponges on his friends and 'strikes' newcomers."

An amusing illustration of the conservatism of these case-hardened Argonauts occurred the other day. The recently elected officers of the Pioneer Society—men of progressive ideas, who have fully kept abreast of the times—ventured on a dangerous innovation. They removed the bar. This was an outrage on "vested rights" not to be endured. The

bibulous fossils rose in their wrath, held an indignation meeting, and threatened to depose the offending officials.

“But,” said the acting President, “the Pioneer Hall ought to be something more than a whiskey shop. The Society ought to do something for the future.”

“You don’t understand the thing at all,” replied the thirsty veteran; “the Society was organized over a bar and a bar it must and shall have.”

San Franciscans make a hobby of their climate. They roll it as a sweet morsel under their tongue. It is their *piece de resistance* in the catalog of blessings. “The dern place seems shaky on her pins,” said a citizen after the great earthquake of 1868; “but there’s one consolation, anyhow, we’ve got the best climate in the world.” It is a climate of strong contrasts. It is eccentric; it is tantalizing; it is seductive. We are piqued at its capriciousness, yet it unfits us for living anywhere else. Summer hardens into winter; winter is glorified into summer. Roses and sunny skies in January; verdureless waste, cold winds and chilling fogs in July.

“Did you ever see such a summer as this?” said one Irishman to another.

“No, be jabbers, not since the middle of last winter.”

We cry for thick blankets while you are sweltering in the dog-day heats; we throw open our doors and windows while you are cowering beneath the sharp stings of winter. Not that all days in summer are cold, and all days in winter warm; but the general rule is, that June, July, and August are detestable, and the rest of the year unequalled for loveliness of weather. There are not only days, but weeks, when the skies are indescribably glorious. The Nile Valley is not so sweetly balmy, Southern Italy not so rich in mellow splendor. The golden sunshine permeates every pore, quickens every pulse of life. The air has an indefinable softness and sweetness—a tonic quality that braces the nerves to a joyous tension, making the very sense of existence a delight. The contrast of temperature between summer and winter is less apparent than real. The remarkable equability of the climate will appear from the following: In June, 1874, the highest thermometer was 67°, the lowest, 58°; in January of the same year, the highest was 59°, the lowest, 54°. In December, the range was between 60° and 52°; in August it was between 68° and 60°.

San Francisco begins to talk of its Park. It is a

crude affair as yet, but promises great things. It comprises about 1,100 acres, and extends from the western limit of the city to the sea. It commands a series of magnificent views, taking in a vast panorama of ocean, bay, mountain and plain. Like everything in this country, it is a thing of rapid growth. Three years ago it was a howling waste of sand; today it has several miles of drives, lovely plateaus covered with grass, flowers, and young trees; sheltered nooks, where the weary citizen may enjoy balmy air, and delicious sunshine; labyrinths of meandering roads and by-paths, rustic cottages, and picnic grounds. The city has been fortunate in its Park Commissioners and Engineer. They are intelligent, unselfish, and public-spirited—the former serving without pay. No taint of jobbery, no suspicion of political management attaches to their administration.

Society has greatly changed for the better within the past few years, but is still somewhat “mixed.” The lines of class and caste are often vague and shadowy. Your coachman of yesterday may be your landlord today. The man who supplied you with vegetables a few years ago may now rank with you socially. The woman who did your washing in the early

days you may look down with pitying eyes upon you tomorrow. Bridget, who was your maid-of-all-work when you first came to the country, lives in a grand house, rejoices in a coachman in livery, and goes to all the great parties. Don't feel hurt if she cuts you, for she is "in society," and cannot afford to be too promiscuous in her acquaintances. It is natural that in a community so largely made up of fortune-hunters wealth should be a controlling social power; but it would be unjust to say that wealth is the sole standard of social position. Occupation, how one lives, and where one lives have something to do with it. There is a story of a rich man—I will not vouch for its truth—who some years ago gave a famous party. He had a large circle of acquaintances, but he could not invite everybody. "We must draw the line somewhere, you know," he said, and he drew it bravely between wholesale and retail. The man who sold soap and candles by the box was decreed to be within the "sacred pale" of society's most elect. The man who sold soap and candles by the pound was voted a social Philistine.

Living at a first-class hotel is a strong presumption of social availability, but living in a boarding-house, excepting two or three which society has in-

dorsed as fashionable, is to incur grave suspicions that you are a mere nobody. But even in a boarding-house the lines may be drawn between those who have a single room and those who have a suite. Said a lady to a little woman recently arrived :

“I see, my dear, you have but one room. This will not do; you will never get into society until you have a suite.”

“But, my husband can’t afford it.”

“He must afford it.”

But all rich people are not shoddies, and all poor people are not socially outcast. There are many—and the number is rapidly multiplying—whom wealth has not spoiled—has not made proud and insolent; to whose houses good men and women with clean antecedents, and small bank accounts, are welcome and honored guests; to whose homes successful rascals and purse-proud boobies are never admitted; who make riches ministers of beneficence, and in conferring pleasures upon their less prosperous fellows, confer happiness upon themselves. I see many signs of healthful social growth.

Our rich men are beginning to learn that there are nobler investments than stocks and bonds; that life has something grander and sweeter than the pursuit

of sordid gain; that he who would leave an honored name behind him must do something for the future as well as for the past; for the public as well as for self.

What manner of person the "Coming Man" of San Francisco is to be is not so clear; but some things may be pretty safely predicted of him.

He will be a fine man physically, clear-brained, if not broad-brained; bold, speculative, dashing—a man of great projects, if not great fulfillments. He will be iconoclastic, unconventional, a hater of shams.

He will have little reverence for the past, little respect for traditions, little patience with precedents, little regard for the opinions of his elder brothers. He will strike out into new paths of progress, dash forward with striding step, rudely jostle more slow-going travelers, as if he were monarch of the road, and born for conquest. He will have boundless faith in himself, will be fertile in resources, quick to see his advantage, prompt to act, possibly careless in the use of means by which to attain ends. In a word, he will typify in his character the dry, clear, intensely electric air of this land of the Setting Sun.

A sketch of San Francisco would be very incomplete that omitted the Chinaman. He is ubiquitous and all-pervading. For good or for evil, he is firmly

rooted to our soil. You can no more expel him than you can the rats. He came here early and evidently means to stay late. He does not mind persecution ; I am not sure that it does not agree with him. His skull is reasonably thick, and can stand a vast amount of stoning. It does not seem to make him feel very badly to be called hard names. Even taxing does not vitally hurt him, or he would have been driven off long ago. He is patient, docile, slow to anger, seldom strikes back, and is never vindictive. He is free from most of the grosser Christian vices. He does not drink ; he does not blaspheme ; he does not engage in broils ; he does not go howling about the streets at night, insulting peaceable citizens, garroting unwary pedestrians or pistoling policemen. He is the most industrious creature in the world. You find him at work when you get up in the morning, and when you retire at night. And this tireless industry, this apparent love of work for work's sake, this irrepressible desire to be doing something and earning something, is what fills the souls of his enemies with despair. If he would only be shiftless and lazy—squander his substance in riotous living—he might be endured. But this heathenish thrift of his is something inexpressibly hard to bear. It cannot be fought against ; it cannot

be put down by bludgeons, legislative statutes, or resolutions of Labor Leagues.

But John has his little vices too. He will gamble; he will drug himself with opium; he will lie to get himself out of a scrape; he will steal on the sly. His morals are of the negative order, and his religion anything but Christ-like. His conscience—I sometimes doubt if he have one—is elastic, and permits him to do pretty much as he pleases. He will unblushingly tamper with the virtue of a guileless revenue inspector or license collector. He will even bribe his god Joss, in order to obtain celestial favors. John is not a humorist, but is occasionally given to sharp sayings and biting repartees.

As a domestic servant, John is occasionally trying to the housewife. He is capricious, sometimes moody, and if things go wrong, will indulge in a mild sort of impudence that is very exasperating. He takes curious freaks; will stop in the midst of his work, pack up his duds, demand his pay and walk off. If you ask for an explanation, he will tersely reply: "Me no likee; too muchee work." Persuasion, appeals to his moral sense, even an offer of better pay, have no effect. Then he may take a sudden notion that he wants to go back to China. You may say to him,

“John, I am very sorry you are going ; who can we get to take your place?” He replies: “My cousin (he always has a cousin — indefinite relays of cousins for all emergencies), him belly good Chinaman, all same as me.” The “cousin,” three times out of four, proves a snare and a delusion—not infrequently a blockhead or a thief.

The Chinese quarter is a system of alleys and passages, labyrinthian in their sinuosities, into which the sunlight never enters ; where it is dark and dismal, even at noonday. A stranger attempting to explore them, would be speedily and hopelessly lost. Many of them seem mere slits in the flanks of the streets—dirty rivulets flowing into the great stream of life. Often they have no exit—terminating in a foul court, a dead wall, a gambling or opium den. They literally swarm with life ; for this human hive is never at rest. Every dent and angle—every nook and cranny in the wall—every foot of surface on the ground is animate. The ultimate problem of Mongolian existence seems to be, how to get the greatest number of human beings into the least possible space. They herd together like cattle in their workshops, eating-houses, and places of social resort. A lodging-house represents an almost solid mass of human

anatomy. The authorities, some time since, found it necessary, for sanitary reasons, to pass an ordinance, prescribing five hundred cubic feet of air, (equal to a space eight feet square) to each person in Chinese tenements; but such contempt have these creatures for oxygen, that they constantly evade or ignore it. You might suppose these slums would be breeding-places of pestilence, but such does not seem to be the fact. No epidemic has violently raged in the Chinese quarter. When, some years ago, the small-pox was carrying off the Caucasian at the rate of nearly one hundred a week, the Mongolian passed unharmed. This remarkable exemption is due partly to the fact that all Chinamen are inoculated in childhood, and that they pay more strict regard to certain essential sanitary laws. The bath is a part of their religion; so is the tooth brush, both of which are daily used under all circumstances.

Not altogether uninteresting is an opium den. Under the escort of a police officer, we grope our way through a dismal court, pass throngs of Chinese of both sexes—the men mostly gamblers, the women all prostitutes; stumble over heaps of rubbish, cooking utensils, etc.; squeeze through a narrow entry, open a door, and are in the den. The reek of the place

is horrible. The air is thick with the fumes of the deadly drug. At first, all is nebulous and indistinct, but in a few moments the eye takes in the outlines of the room. It is filled with men, all lying down on mats, on benches, on the floor; some on their sides; some on their backs. They are in every stage of narcotism from the dreamy languor induced by the first few whiffs of the opium pipe to soggy insensibility. Some are hilarious; some are sullen and scowl viciously at us; some are given to the most seductive reveries; some are murmuring incoherent words in their dreams; one or two are sleeping the heavy death-like sleep of souls utterly subjugated by the insidious poison. An old man raises himself up on his haunches and extends a withered hand in a token of friendly greeting, and offers us his pipe with, "You smokee? Him belly fine." We decline and pass on. Another stares at us with glazed eyes, looking the picture of hopeless imbecility. Our guide says, "John, you smokee too much opium; by'm bye you go to Mission" (you die). "Me no care," responded the wretch; "me like he," pointing to his little opium box, "me smokee all same." Many of these creatures live in these dens. They have their bunks, for which they pay so much rent, and in which they keep their

worldly possessions. They do their cooking in a little court outside, pass the few waking hours of their existence in listless misery, seldom go out on the street, and long for the night, when they may repeat the Lethean debauch. Others work a part of the day and repair to the opium den at night, where they spend all their earnings. The amount consumed varies from a few grains to an ounce a night. The opium is not furnished by the keeper, but is brought in by the consumer.

The opium pipe consists of a straight, or slightly curved stem, about eighteen inches long, with a bowl three inches round, in the center of which is a small circular hole. This leads to a smaller reservoir in the center of the bowl, and a channel runs from this to the end of the pipe, which the smoker places in his mouth. He takes a bit of wire and dips the end into prepared opium, which is about the consistency of mucilage. The drop of the drug that adheres to the wire is held in the flame of a lamp, and, under the influence of the heat, it bubbles and changes color like boiling molasses. It is now smoking hot, and upon being placed in the hole of the bowl, will yield the smoker several whiffs. He easily draws the smoke from the stem, sends it into his

lungs, and finally discharges it through his nostrils.

The gambling dens are a characteristic feature of the Chinese quarter. There are, or were until recently, for the police have been remorselessly swooping down upon them, no less than three hundred of these establishments. Many of them are petty fortresses, approached by a series of narrow passages, with doors of thick Oregon pine, securely barred and bolted. Sentinels are on the look-out, who, on the approach of danger, give warning; the lights are instantly extinguished; the doors shut, and the inmates scamper off like rats through secret rear exits, or over the roofs of the adjoining houses. The retreat being cut off, the gamblers will stand a siege, and the only way to capture them is to batter down the door with a sledge hammer, or cut a passage through the roof. The principal game of chance is very simple, and is called "Tan." A square, or oblong table, covered with matting, stands in the middle of the room. The dealer takes a handful of beans or small coin, and throws them on the board. He then divides the pile into four parts with a hooked stick. The gamblers stake their wagers on what the remainder will be after the pile has been divided by four, whether one, two, three, or naught. Those

who have money on the lucky chance receive double the amount of their wager, and the remainder of the coin goes to the bank. The game is very exciting, the players frequently staking their all on a single venture. There are various other games with dice and dominoes, and cards, while the lottery is a favorite form of gambling.

The theater is one of the show places of Chinatown. It will seat nearly a thousand people, and has a pit, gallery, and boxes. The men sit on one side of the house, the women on the other—the former with their hats on. All are smoking; the men, cigars and pipes; the women, cigarettes. The performance usually begins at seven in the evening, and closes at two in the morning; but on festive occasions it begins at two in the afternoon, and closes at four in the morning. An historical play is usually about six months long, being continued from night to night until the end. If one dies before it is finished, I suppose his heirs get the benefit of what is left. The stage is a cold and barren affair, with no scenery or appointments to speak of. There is no curtain even. When the hero dramatically dies, and the heroine faints, after lying still a reasonable time they get up and walk off. The orchestra sit in the back part of the

stage with their hats on, puffing away at villainous cigars. There are no female performers, feminine parts being assumed by men or lads. The text of the piece is spoken in a drawling, sing-song tone; the gestures apparently absurd and meaningless. The music is inexpressibly ear-splitting and nerve-shattering—all the discords blended into one.

There are eight heathen temples, or Joss houses, in San Francisco. Some of them are fitted up with considerable splendor. The divine Joss sits on a throne, with an assisting deity on each side. He is a hideous-looking fellow, fierce and brutal of countenance, dressed in showy costume, and decked with a profusion of ornaments. In one corner is a sort of furnace in which is burnt every morning the effigies of those who slew the god. The women have a special female Joss in a separate apartment, whom they worship, and to whom they present offerings. A visit to one of these temples does not give us an exalted idea of Mongolian devotion.

There is apparently very little sentiment of reverence. To all appearances, John is sadly wanting in respect for his divinity. He walks into the Joss house in a shambling, indifferent sort of way, makes his offering, and walks out.

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