

and teamsters. An ex-judge of oyer and terminer was driving an ox-team from Coloma to Sacramento. One man who had been a State senator and secretary of state in one of our western commonwealths was doing a profitable business at manufacturing "cradles," while an ex-governor of one of our southwestern States played the fiddle in a gambling saloon. These things were hardly remarked. Every one went to the Slope with

the determination to make money; and if the mines did not afford it, the next inquiry was what pursuit or business would the sooner accomplish the desired end. Thousands who had not the necessary stamina for the vicissitudes of a miner's life, nor yet the means of going into any of the various channels of trade, were for a time compelled to serve in capacities far beneath their deserts, until time and means should justify them in choosing for themselves.

*Charles B. Gillespie.*



"BROKE."

## CALIFORNIANA.

### ANECDOTES OF THE MINES.

BY HUBERT BURGESS.

#### One Way of Salting a Claim.

To "salt a claim" is to sprinkle gold dust about it in certain places in order to deceive those who may be seeking investment. In this way in the early days of California worthless claims were made to appear rich, and were often sold for large sums of money. In the course of time this practice became so common that purchasers were always on their guard, and it was necessary to exercise much ingenuity in order to deceive them. I know of one instance where solid earth was removed to the depth of six feet and, after coarse gold had been mixed with it, was replaced and covered with rubbish in such a way as to look firm and natural. Soon after, a party came along who wished to buy, and judging from appearances they selected the very place for prospecting which had been salted for them, deeming it less likely to have been tampered with than the rest of the claim. Of course they thought they had "struck it rich," but they realized only the salt. Sometimes claims were pronounced worthless before sufficient work had been done on them. When these were salted and sold to persevering miners they frequently netted large fortunes to those who had unwittingly purchased them.

In 1851 a party of American miners had been working a claim near Columbia, Tuolumne County, California, and not having even found the "color" they became discouraged; the more so as a company of Chinamen a short distance above them were doing very well. The Americans having expressed a willingness to sell, one day three Chinamen went to look at the claim. They talked it over among themselves and finally asked

the owners at what price they would sell. Of course the Americans made it out rich and put a high figure on it, though in fact they were resolved to sell out at any price, being sure that the ground was worthless. It was decided that the Chinamen should bring their picks and pans next day to prospect, and if they were satisfied they would buy at the figure agreed upon.

The miners, thinking it would probably be their last chance to sell, determined to salt the claim. It was a large piece of ground and the trouble was where to put the "salt." One of the men soon hit upon a very ingenious plan. He took his gun and went, as he said, to get a quail or two, but in reality to kill a snake. As there were a great many about the place, he soon killed a large gopher-snake, which resembles the rattlesnake in appearance but is perfectly harmless to man. Putting his game into a bag, he returned to camp.

On being asked by his companions what he had brought back for supper, he shook out the snake and explained his idea thus:

"Now, boys, when the Chinamen come to-morrow, they won't allow any of us to be too near, because they're afraid of 'salt.' Well, Jim, you walk along on top of the bank and have that dead snake in your pocket. Bill and me will stay talking to the Johns, I'll have my gun over my shoulder as if I was going for a rabbit, only you see I'll put 'salt' into the gun instead of shot. We'll find out where they're going to pan out next, and you be looking on, innocent like, with the snake ready to drop where I tell you. When them fellers start to walk there, just slide him down the bank, and when we all get there, I'll holler 'Hold on, boys!' and before they know what's up, I'll fire the 'salt' all around there and make believe I killed the snake. How'll that do?"

Next morning four Chinamen came prepared for work. They tried a few places, but of course did not get the "color." The Americans kept at a distance so that there could be no complaint.

"Well, John," said the schemer, "where you try next, over in that corner?"

The Chinamen were suspicious in a moment. They were familiar with salted claims and were well on their guard. "No likee dis corn'. Tlie him nudder corn'," pointing to the opposite one.

Jim, with his hands in his pockets, was above on the bank, many feet away, watching; when he saw them point in that direction, his partner gave a nod and he pitched the snake on the ground near the place. The leader exclaimed, "Hold on boys!" and fired before they could tell which way to look. Going up to the snake, he pushed the gun under it and carried it away hanging over the barrel. Jim walked off and Bill sat on a wheelbarrow on the opposite side from where they were at work. The Chinamen had no suspicion. They carried away several pans of dirt to wash in a stream near by, and when they returned Bill felt pretty sure they had struck some of the "salt," but the Chinamen said nothing except, "Claim no good. Melikin man talkee too muchee."

The Americans, knowing the game, refused to take less than the specified price, which the Chinamen finally paid and in two days the sellers were off to new diggings.

The strangest part of the story is that the claim turned out to be one of the richest in the district. The Chinamen made a great deal of money, sold out and went home.

"Hold on boys, till I make this shot."

IN 1851 Mokelumne Hill was one of the worst camps in California. "Who was shot last week?" was the first question asked by the miners when they came in from the river or surrounding diggings on Saturday nights or Sundays to gamble or get supplies. It was very seldom that the answer was "No one."

Men made desperate by drink or losses at the gambling table, would race up and down the thoroughfares, in single file, as boys play the game of "follow my leader," each imitating the actions of the foremost. Selecting some particular letter in a sign they would fire in turn, regardless of everything but the accuracy of the aim. Then they would quarrel over it as though they were boys, playing a game of marbles, while every shot was likely to kill or wound some unfortunate person.

The gambling tents were large and contained not only gaming tables but billiard tables. At one of these I was once playing billiards with a man named H—. A few feet from us, raised upon a platform made for the purpose, were seated three Mexican musicians, playing guitars; for these places were always well supplied with instrumental music. The evening seldom passed without disputes, and pistols were quickly drawn to settle quarrels. Upon any outbreak men would rush from all parts of the room, struggling to get as near as possible to the scene of action, and often they paid the pen-

alty for their curiosity by being accidentally shot. While H— and I were engaged in our game, we could hear the monotonous appeal of the dealers, "Make your game, gentlemen, make your game. Red wins and black loses." Suddenly *bang, bang, bang* went the pistols in a distant part of the tent. The usual rush followed. *Bang, bang*, again, and this time the guitar dropped from the hands of one of the unoffending musicians, who fell forward to the ground with a bullet through his neck. His friends promptly undertook to carry him past us to the open air. Our table was so near the side of the tent that only one person at a time could go between it and the canvas. H— was standing in the way, just in the act of striking the ball with his cue, when one of the persons carrying the wounded man touched him with the request that he move to one side. He turned and saw the Mexican being supported by the legs and arms, the blood flowing from his neck; then with the coolest indifference he said, "Hold on, hold on, boys, till I make this shot," then, resuming his former position, he deliberately finished his shot.

These events occurred so constantly that residents of the place became callous, and although at the sound of the pistol crowds rushed forward, it was with no deeper feeling than curiosity.

Sometimes in the newer communities property as well as life was in danger. I remember that one night in West Point, Calaveras County, a party of roughs "cleaned out" the leading saloon because the proprietor would not furnish them free whisky.

A little later law and order began to assert their claims in the community. Several families from the East came in, and a protest was made against the sway of the gamblers. The result was that the card business did not pay so well; miners grew more careful of their money, and the professional "sports" left the place in great numbers. One of them as he packed up his chips remarked: "They're getting too partickler. If a feller pulls his pistol in self-defense and happens to blow the top of a miner's head off, they haul him up before a jury. The good old times are about over here, and the country's played out!"

"The Date of the Discovery of the Yosemite."

EDITOR OF THE CENTURY MAGAZINE: My communication in the December number of THE CENTURY on "The Date of the Discovery of the Yosemite" has brought to me several letters, including one from a writer from California who quotes a statement made by George Coulter, the founder of Coulterville, corroborating in detail the circumstances as narrated in my communication, *except in the one essential particular*. He is quoted as saying that the party I met at his store did not go so far into the mountains as the Yosemite, but made their attack upon the Indians in a cañon on the north fork of the Merced *below* the Yosemite. I accept his statement, as reported, and am pleased to withdraw all contention of the claim made by Doctor Bunnell that he was the original discoverer.

MONTCLAIR, March 27, 1891.

Julius H. Pratt.

## Talleyrand.

THE paragraphs from the Memoirs which did not reach us in time to follow the passage given in the *JUNE CENTURY* simply threw out the idea that Maubreuil, who accused Talleyrand of the desire to bribe him to assassinate the fallen Emperor, in 1814, probably obtained his passports for a "secret mission" merely as one of the numerous emissaries sent out by the royalists to all points in France to proclaim the "legitimate" government. Talleyrand again denies the attempted accusation, and shows, moreover, how absurd and useless it would have been, as well as infamous.

## An Incident of "General Miles's Indian Campaigns."

GENERAL NELSON A. MILES, after seeing the proofs of Major G. W. Baird's article in this number of *THE CENTURY*, wrote to the editor as follows :

Referring to the desperate fight with the Nez Percés in September, 1877 [see pages 363-364], in which Major G. W. Baird states that a staff officer went from me to give certain orders to Captain Hale and found that officer dead, Major Baird very modestly omits his own name, which should be inserted, as he was adjutant at that time, and in carrying the order he found Captain Hale and Lieutenant Biddle dead, and received two desperate wounds himself, one shattering his left arm and the other cutting the side of his head.

## CALIFORNIANA.

## Arrival of Overland Trains in California in '49."

WITH the fall of '49 came to California the vanguard of the immense immigration that braved the hardships of weather, Indian perils, cholera, fevers and starvation, in that long march across a continent in pursuit of gold. Not only men, but delicate women and children shut their eyes to every comfort and association of home, and faithfully shared these dangers and perils, or were buried in nameless graves on prairie, mountain, or desert.

In every subsequent year the State of California, with liberal appropriation and abundant supplies, sent out her citizens with open hand to welcome and aid the feeble and exhausted with every necessary assistance at the latter end of their long journey. But in 1849 there was no organized effort for systematic succor. The emigrants of that year were numbered by thousands, and circumstances made it impossible, except to a very limited extent, to meet and greet them even with words of good cheer. It was only through individual effort that aid could be extended them, and almost every individual was in some respects as hard pressed as they.

I can find only one instance upon the official records where Government protection was thrown around them, and that is in General Riley's report to the War Department, under date of August 30, 1849, in which he says, in reference to his need of soldiers in place of those who had deserted: "The detachment of dragoons on their march to the Department with the collector of this district and the *Arkansas emigrants*, have not yet arrived."

Among those who contributed individual effort in going out to meet the trains I can name only a few—first of all General Sutter; Sam Brannan of Sacramento, who was identified with the so-called "Mormon battalion"; Colonel Gillespie, formerly United States consul for Lower California, then a merchant in Sacramento; General Morehouse, Dr. Semple, and, I may safely say, the business men of Sacramento generally. There were others, but at this late day it is impossible to name them. Even the name of the comrade who accompanied the writer is forgotten.

Among those who came to Auburn in May, 1849, was Dr. Deal of Baltimore, a physician and a Methodist preacher. He was very enthusiastic in stating his purpose to become one of the "honest miners," and calling a gathering together with a long tin dinner-horn,

he expressed his intention to dig with them, and to institute divine worship the next Sunday, and he closed by making the hills echo with a cheery hymn. Monday morning's sunrise saw the doctor in the mines with tin pan, pick, and shovel. Eleven o'clock saw him with his shovel battered, his pick broken, his hands bruised and blistered, and his clothes muddy, placing his tools and tin horn in a wagon bound for Sutter's Fort. It was well he did, for together with another good Samaritan he leased a part of Sutter's Fort for a hospital, and when the forlorn bands of immigrants reached the Fort they found medical attention and care, which in many cases saved life or eased the passage to the grave.

The "Long Bar" mining claim on Bear Creek, where I was located, lay in the route of arriving immigrants, on the Sutter's Fort trail, a hundred miles from the fort. I shall never forget the sight presented by the tired, starved, sick, and discouraged travelers, with their bony and foot-sore cattle and teams. Men, women, and children, and animals were in every state of distress and emaciation. Some had left everything along the way, abandoning wagons and worn-out cattle to the wolves—leaving even supplies of clothing, flour, and food—and in utter desperation and extremity had packed their own backs with flour and bacon; some had utilized the backs of surviving oxen for the same purpose; and a few of the immigrants had thus made the last 600 miles on foot, exhausted, foot-sore, and starving.

Such as we could we relieved from our simple camp stores of flour, bacon, and coffee. Our blankets were spread on the ground for our nightly rest, always after an evening bath in the cooling snow-waters of Bear Creek, and our sleep was sweet and sound. But there was no comfort or relief for those worn-out men, women, and children. The few of us in that lonely river bed in the mountains did what we could, and then urged them on to Sutter's Fort and Sacramento.

I remember well the arrival of a once stalwart man, reduced almost to a skeleton. His comrades had perished on the way with cholera, his cattle had given out, and, selecting what he could carry that was most essential, he had finished the journey on foot. Reaching the place where we were digging and washing out the gold, he threw himself upon the ground, and said:

"And now I've reached at last where you dig out the gold. For this I have sacrificed everything. I had a comfortable home, but I got 'the fever.' Everything is gone, my comrades are dead, and this is all there is left of me. I thought I would be glad to get here, but I am not. I don't feel the least desire to dig gold now. All I ask for is rest—rest—rest. It seems to me as if I never could get rested again. I want to find home—*home*—and there is no home here."

He inquired how far it was to Sutter's Fort, and refusing proffered food or a look at the gold, he staggered feebly on again to look for "rest" and "home."

In September the swarm of immigrants became so continuous and their condition was so wretched, that I obtained one of their mules that seemed able to carry me, and giving up my business of gold-digging for a time started with a comrade up the Truckee River route to advise and encourage the new-comers. Here I witnessed many sorrowful scenes among sick and hungry women and children just ready to die, and dead and dying cattle. The cattle were usually reduced to skeletons. There was no grass, and they were fed solely by cutting down trees for them to browse on. But the cattle were too many for this supply of food along the trail. I once counted as many as thirty yoke hitched together to pull an almost empty wagon up a hillside, while to descend an incline it was necessary to chain a large tree to the back of the wagon, with all its limbs attached that they might impede the descent of the wagon, for the cattle were entirely too weak to offer the necessary resistance. One after another the wagons would follow, and thus slowly work their way up and down the mountain sides of the Sierra pass, while the women and children wearily plodded along in the deep, dry, and exceedingly dusty trail. Some fared better, but I apprehend few would ever care to pass twice through the hardships of the overland journey of '49.

As an instance of courage and suffering: A preacher, of the Methodist Church in Indiana, accompanied by his wife (a delicate little woman) and three children, started overland with ox teams. On the journey he was suddenly attacked with dysentery and had to lie helpless in the bottom of his wagon, vibrat-

ing between life and death. His brave little wife took his place, walked by the side of the team and guided them; but she lost her way, and for two weeks, with husband and children to care for, trudged along alone until by good fortune or a good Providence she found the trail again. I afterward made their acquaintance in Columbia, where he was pastor of the Methodist church. Wishing his church sealed inside, he took off his clerical coat, chopped wood, broke up limestone boulders, burned them into lime, and with his own hands plastered the interior of the church in good style.

At first we tried to give the new-comers employment on our mining claims, but in every case but one their strength was not equal to the labor of digging gold, and on they swept, all eager to reach a "settlement." Some in their enthusiasm had, at great sacrifice, dragged along strange, heavy, and wonderful patent devices to work out the gold. Often they had thrown away their flour and bacon, thus reducing themselves to starvation, to make room for their pet machine, which on trial was found utterly worthless, and was left to rust or rot in the mines.

Special relief parties were also sent up the trail with supplies of food, medicine, and other necessaries, as well as with fresh animals, and many immigrants were safely brought in, before the snows fell in the mountains, who otherwise might have perished in the storms of early fall.

*A. C. Ferris.*

#### A Fourth Survivor of the Gold Discovery Party.

REV. JAMES GILLILAN, of Nephi, Utah, informs us that in addition to the three survivors of the party at Sutter's Mill at the time of the discovery of gold in California—namely, Messrs. Bigler, Smith, and Wimmer, as stated by Mr. Hittell in our February number—there is a fourth survivor, Mr. Wilford Hudson (not "Willis" as printed on page 530 of that number). Mr. Hudson is living at Grantsville, Tooele County, Utah, and his description of the circumstances of the gold discovery, says our informant, "substantially accords with Mr. Hittell's account."

## BRIC-À-BRAC.

### A Ballad of Paper Fans.

LET others rave o'er Raphael,  
And dim and ancient canvas scan;  
Give me in this so tropic spell  
The simple art of paper fan:  
The long-legged stork of far Japan,  
A-flying through its straggling trees,  
Does all for me that painting can—  
I bless the gentle Japanese.

Give me such dragons fierce and fell  
As earth saw when its life began;  
Sweet views of frog and lily-bell,  
Of moon-faced maid, and slant-eyed man;  
Of flow'ry boughs athwart the wan  
Full-orbed moon; of azure seas;

And roseate landscapes on a plan  
Peculiar to the Japanese.

Give me the hills that sink and swell,  
Faint green and purple, pink and tan.  
Joy would it ever be to dwell  
Where streams that little bridges span,  
Ignored, may flow 'twixt maid's sedan  
And lover's whispered flatteries;  
For happy hearts are dearer than  
Perspective to the Japanese.

*L'Envoi.*

O Love, how lightly, sweetly ran  
Life's sands for us in climes like these!  
Long leagues would lose their power to ban  
Were you and I but Japanese!

*Annie Steger Winston.*