

we have before been gratified with. We entered a valley probably half a mile in length and exceedingly narrow. Towering upon either hand, for a height of two thousand feet, were perpendicular walls of rock. At the extremity opposite our place of entrance was an enormous egg-shaped boulder, just filling the interstice between the two walls and fitting so snugly as to effectually bar all entrance or exit. Beneath the stone is a space just sufficient to admit the passage of a mountain stream. A short distance below this is a small valley completely rock-bound, if we except a passageway six feet in width at either extremity. It is a matter of absolute impossibility to effect either entrance or exit from this valley in any other way than by one of these passes. This is said to have been a favorite strong-hold of Joaquin Murieta. Vasquez is also said to have sought its retirement, when closely pursued, and to have enjoyed many days of quiet in its secure retreat.

About 18 miles N. W. of Jolon, on the San Antonio River, is a cave and rock well worth the trouble and fatigue encountered in paying the visit. The cave, just beneath a huge rock, is about 30 feet wide, one hundred feet long, and sufficiently lofty to allow a mounted man to pass through the entrance, without bending from a perfectly erect position.

The floor, composed of solid rock, is completely punctured with holes formerly used by the Indians as mortars for pulverizing their acorns, etc. The cave has formed a place of rendezvous in times of quiet and of retreat in moments of danger, and has been inhabited exclusively by such daring outlaws as Joaquin Murieta and Tiburcio Vasquez. The natural advantages offered by this, as a robbers' cave, are manifold, and apparent at first glance, though we by no means wish to appear an authority in such matters.

A bridle-path, conducting by a bridge over a chasm formed by the interstice between two boulders, leads to the top of the rock; any party approaching this must "*enfilade*," as the bridge will admit of the passage of only one at a time.

But, having reached the summit of this rock, what a sight confronts one. *Terra firma* lies an hundred feet below, and here, all around us, at such an elevation, like the hanging gardens of Babylon, teem twenty acres of forest vegetation. Here are great, towering pines and oaks, and the dusky manzanita; while over all the vacant space the rustling grass quivers at a height of four feet.

Running along parallel to one side of the rock is a ditch, possibly one hundred and fifty yards in length, very nearly straight, having a width of three feet at the bottom, of from five to eight at the top, with a depth varying from five to ten feet. It undoubtedly is a specimen of man's handiwork, but how many years or ages since the hand which performed it lost its cunning, none may tell. This rock, in times past, was used by Joaquin's band as a corral for their horses, it being well adapted to that use, having only one approach, and that being easily guarded from its very narrowness. To this day the place is called, in memory of its bandit occupants, "the pasturage." This place can also be visited from Soledad, the route being through Reliz Canyon, to the settlement at the head of Mission Creek. Here a guide can be procured, or the road easily learned upon inquiry.

Three miles North-west of Salinas is the town of

SANTA RITA,

With a population of 85—48 males and 37 females. Here are two stores, two blacksmith shops, one hotel, two saloons, and a school with an attendance of 75 pupils. There is also a church, a pretty little structure, which can be seen for many miles on all sides. The town is built in a little depression, just sufficient to shelter it from the winds of Salinas Valley.

Six miles North from Salinas is the town of

NATIVIDAD.

This is one of the oldest towns in the County, and in early days was a station for the Coast Line Stages. Since the discontinuance of the line, it has fallen somewhat into the "sere and yellow leaf." Its business interests have gone to the dogs, and with the exception of a capital Hotel, it does not offer many inducements, nor does it exert itself to supply attractions for the stranger.

Adjoining the town is a good mile race-track.