

Thus commenced a human stampede such as few things less than an avalanche, an earthquake, a conquering army, or a flood, could produce. Who would drudge and fag at dry goods, at the press, on ship or on shore, for wages which seemed a mere pittance when contrasted with the fabulous wealth which lay in the beds and banks of the streams, ready to bestow a golden smile upon the wooer? Away went laborer and mechanic. Away went clerk and merchant. Business in the town stood still. Tents were empty—houses shut up. The turkey buzzard alighted in the streets; grass grew where men had trod; ships lay at anchor without a keeper; the town was almost depopulated. The newspapers ceased their issues, for the printers and pressmen had fled like people from the plague of London, and the editor exchanged the quill for the crowbar, the scissors for the pick, and, instead of writing leaders upon the supplies of gold, he rushed to the mines and washed it from his pan. The people of the place having left, off went the government also. The town was almost deserted. After awhile, the "Californian" revives, and is issued once more on the 15th of July. Nearly a month later a grand illumination in honor of the peace with Mexico, occurred on the 11th of August. Something later, viz., on the 9th of September, a public meeting decided that sixteen dollars an ounce should be the rate at which gold dust should be received in business transactions, and it was resolved to urge upon Congress the establishment of a mint in the town, so confident were the people, many of whom had returned from the mines, that the supply would be enormous.

On the 1st of November, Rev. T. Dwight Hunt was elected chaplain, to preach to the citizens in the school-house, on the south-west corner of the Plaza. Prices of provisions were high, wages also still advancing. Real estate did not follow the usual increase in prices; it may be said to have jumped from low figures to princely sums, doubling in the space of twenty-four hours, and even in many instances at a still more rapid rate. Cargoes of goods were landed—the duties during the year amounting to nearly \$200,000; the goods imported, to nearly a million of dollars in value; coin to an equal amount, and the export of gold for the last half of the year reaching two millions of dollars. Since then it has reached more than twice that amount monthly. As might be anticipated, the world was stirred at such a result so soon after the discovery, and the thousands of adventurers throughout civilization had already begun to prepare for their emigration.

Many who had tried their luck in the mines, returned to San Francisco. Even their great success in obtaining gold could not compensate all for their privations; the exposure, the sickness, the hard labor and harder fare, which fell to their lot. And the shrewd trader saw that rich as were the gold placers, a richer field for accumulating wealth lay open before him in the town itself. The great prices and great rise in various kinds of goods, provisions and other necessities of life, opened the brightest prospects for those who preferred trade to gold-hunting. He saw, also, that immigration from the nearest territories was but a mite to that which would flow in from abroad, when the wild reports of abundant gold should reach and be accredited in the Eastern States, in Europe, and among the eastern nations of Asia. Very wisely some chose the placers in the town in which to coin fortunes, instead of the ravines and river beds, where they might dig the raw material. So they remained. Experience proved the wisdom of their choice. The profits of some firms were