

enormous. Fortunes were acquired in a year through trade. For soon the influx of strangers became enormous. The key note was struck. The music had gone abroad, and the echoes were heard returning in the voices of hundreds of thousands of gold-seekers, and the sounds of trade and business which their advent made. Cadmus had sowed the dragon's teeth, and now sprung up on all sides men armed for the combat—the battle for gold against every obstacle—ocean dangers, long voyages, dangerous travel, deserts, Indians, sickness, hunger, thirst, starvation, heat, cold, toil, absence, isolation, death. The nations were stirred, the sea was alive with ships, the ships with multitudes; the deserts heard human voices; the mountains felt the rushing tread of westward-moving myriads; and soon this host were to touch the shores, tread the sands and make busy the streets, tents and stores of San Francisco.

The "Star and Californian" newspaper, which had succeeded the "California Star" and "Californian," uniting the two offices during the latter part of 1848, became the "Alta California" on the 4th of January, 1849. After the middle of this month, when an election for a new town-council had been held, the civil aspect of the town was rather mixed and uncertain, there being three councils, each claiming to be the legitimate one. That of the early part of 1848 finally yielded to the one chosen on the 15th of January, but the one chosen on December 27th still held out. Finally a compromise was effected through a public meeting; the members of both councils resigned, and fourteen new members were elected for the council, and three as justices, on the 21st of February. On the last day of February the steamship California, the pioneer of the mail steamers of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, arrived, and was warmly received. On the 31st of March arrived the steamship Oregon, bringing the first regular mail and the first postmaster for San Francisco—Col. John W. Geary. During the first half of this year the municipal affairs of the place were in chaos. There was, indeed, no settled government—the people opposing the claims of Mr. Leavenworth, the Alcalde, and Governor Riley supporting him. However, the Governor finally issued his proclamation for an election on the 1st of August for municipal and other officers, and for delegates to form a State Constitution. The people held a meeting, denied the right of Governor Riley to appoint the time and place for election of delegates, yet acquiesced, as a matter of policy, in his proposal or order. The legislative council finally dissolved, and left the Alcalde and his council in undisputed sway.

The population was fast increasing, the harbor was fast filling with ships, the immigrants were coming by thousands, improvements were progressing rapidly, and business was exceedingly brisk and profitable. Fresh comers made their purchases and left for the mines; successful miners returned with their quickly-acquired fortunes, to spend their gold at the gaming table, or in other modes of dissipation, or to appropriate it in purchases for the mining trade, lands, or buildings. The people as yet were like one of the tribes of Israel, living in tents; or like the Arabs, sleeping in the air and on the sand. Everything went with a rush. Society there was none. As in Israel at one time, "every man did that which seemed good in his own eyes." By midsummer, disorder reigned; lawless persons became a terror to the well-disposed, and, having formed themselves into a kind of organization known as the "Hounds," spread terror and dismay through a town by this time having a population of at least five thousand persons. They committed all sorts of outrages,