

CHAPTER V.

CALIFORNIA.

1841.

AFTER Lieutenant-Commandant Ringgold joined the Vincennes, she bore away for San Francisco, for the purpose of carrying into effect my instructions (see Appendix VI). She arrived at that port on the 14th of August, and anchored off Yerba Buena. Several vessels, amongst them two Americans, were found here, and intelligence was received of the death of General Harrison, President of the United States.

As soon as the ship anchored, an officer was despatched on shore to call upon the authorities; but none of any description were to be found. The only magistrate, an alcalde, was absent. The frequency of revolutions in this country had caused a great change since the visit of Captain Beechey.

On the 17th, after consultation with the captain of the port, a Mr. Richardson, the ship was moved to the north shore, at Sausalito, or Whaler's Harbour. Water, which it was impossible to obtain at Yerba Buena, on account of the drought that had prevailed for several months, is here to be had from a small spring. After the ship was moored, the boats were hoisted out, and fitted for surveying duties up the river Sacramento.

On approaching the coast in the neighbourhood of San Francisco, the country has by no means an inviting aspect. To the north, it rises in a lofty range, whose highest point is known as the Table Hill, and forms an iron-bound coast from Punto de los Reyes to the mouth of the harbour.

To the south, there is an extended sandy beach, behind which rise the sand-hills of San Bruno, to a moderate height. There are no