

symptoms of cultivation, nor is the land on either side fit for it; for in the former direction it is mountainous, in the latter sandy, and in both barren. The entrance to the harbour is striking: bold and rocky shores confine the rush of the tide, which bore us on and through a narrow passage into a large estuary: in this, several islands and rocks lie scattered around: some of the islands are clothed with vegetation to their very tops; others are barren and covered with guano, having an immense number of sea-fowls hovering over, around, and alighting upon them. The distant shores of the bay extend north and south far beyond the visible horizon, exhibiting one of the most spacious, and at the same time safest ports in the world. To the east rises a lofty inland range, known by the name of La Sierra, brilliant with all the beautiful tints that the atmosphere in this climate produces.

Yerba Buena is the usual though by no means the best anchorage. The town, as is stated, is not calculated to produce a favourable impression on a stranger. Its buildings may be counted, and consist of a large frame building, occupied by the agent of the Hudson Bay Company, a store, kept by Mr. Spears, an American, a billiard-room and bar, a poop cabin of a ship, occupied as a dwelling by Captain Hinckley, a blacksmith's shop, and some out-buildings. These, though few in number, are also far between. With these, I must not forget to enumerate an old dilapidated adobe building, which has a conspicuous position on the top of the hill overlooking the anchorage. When to this we add a sterile soil and hills of bare rock, it will be seen that Yerba Buena and the country around it are any thing but beautiful. This description holds good when the tide is high, but at low water it has for a foreground an extensive mud-flat, which does not add to the beauty of the view.

Although I was prepared for anarchy and confusion, I was surprised when I found a total absence of all government in California, and even its forms and ceremonies thrown aside.

After passing through the entrance, we were scarcely able to distinguish the Presidio; and had it not been for its solitary flag-staff, we could not have ascertained its situation. From this staff no flag floated; the building was deserted, the walls had fallen to decay, the guns were dismounted, and every thing around it lay in quiet. We were not even saluted by the stentorian lungs of some soldier, so customary in Spanish places, even after all political power as well as military and civil rule has fled. I afterwards learned that the Presidio was still a garrison in name, and that it had not been wholly abandoned; but the remnant of the troops stationed there consisted of no more than an officer and one soldier. I was not able to learn the rank