

of the number of the whites, or gente de razon. These have been usually estimated at five thousand; but, from the best information, I could not satisfy myself that they number more than three thousand souls. In this estimate is not included those of mixed blood, who may amount to two thousand more; so that in the whole of Upper California, at the date of our visit, the entire population was about fifteen thousand souls; and this estimate cannot be far from the truth.

The health and robustness of the white inhabitants seem remarkable, and must be attributed to the fine climate, as well as to their simple diet. This consists of beef roasted upon the coals, a few vegetables, and the tortilla, which is a thin cake, made of corn-meal, and baked upon a sheet of iron. Throughout the country, both with the rich and poor, this is the general fare; but some few luxuries have been lately introduced, among which are rice and tea. The latter is used so sparingly, that the discoloration of the water is scarcely perceptible. At the missions they live more after the Spanish fashion. The children are, for the most part, left to take care of themselves, and run about naked and dirty. They are generally robust, and their relative number seems to be very great; thus, it is by no means uncommon to see families of fourteen or fifteen children; and an instance was mentioned to me of a woman near Yerba Buena, who had had twenty-six. A large number die from accidental falls from horses, with which from their earliest childhood they are accustomed to be engaged. They early become expert and fearless riders, and this skill is not confined altogether to the male sex; the women are almost equally expert. Families with numerous members are seldom met with who have not had to mourn the loss of several of their number from casualties of this sort.

Although the Californians are comparatively few in number, yet they have a distinctive character. Descended from the old Spaniards, they are unfortunately found to have all their vices, without a proper share of their virtues; they are exceedingly fond of gambling, which is equally in favour with the male and female portion of the community. Their games consist in cards, dice, &c.

Their amusements are cock-fighting, bull and bear-baiting, and dancing; these are the predominant occupations of their lives, always accompanied with excessive drinking. Parties of amusement, to which the surrounding population is invited, are frequent; these generally last for three days, and rarely break up without some quarrel. Weddings are particularly liable to these disorders, and at each of the three last that took place at and in the vicinity of Yerba Buena, previous to our