

than any other thing to which I can liken it. I think we counted twenty-nine bends before we reached the point at which we were to disembark, which was nearly at the head of the creek. We were compelled to haul the boat along by the grass and rushes on each side, and it was near midnight before we achieved our object. As we passed through this narrow inlet, the birds that were lodged for the night, alarmed by the noise we made, flew in thousands from the marshes. Their fluttering was so great as to resemble the rushing of a vast wave; for as they rose, thousands seemed to follow thousands, until the sound died away in the distance, and again seemed to approach in an opposite direction. In the pitchy darkness, not a bird was to be seen, although they must have passed only a few feet above our heads.

At the Embarcadero we found no house or accommodations of any kind; but the guide soon led us to what he termed the road, which was found marked by the huge ruts made by the ox-carts. The walk was of service to us, as we had become chilled with the cold and damp air.

After proceeding a mile over a level plain, we reached the estancia. The first notice we had of it was a broken cortal, and the ground covered with vast quantities of bones, hoofs, and horns. Over these we stumbled continually, until, on turning the corner of the cortal, we were set upon by a pack of dogs, some fifty in number, which barked in every tone, from the snappish note of the pug to the sonorous voice of the bull-dog. All came forward, intent upon arresting our progress towards the large adobe building, which was now in dim outline before us. The bones served us as missiles to keep them at bay, and thus to protect our approach to the premises; and when we reached the porch, we gave the discourteous curs a full discharge. We knocked lustily for some time, but no answer was returned, nor could we see any light; but on a frequent repetition, each time redoubling our efforts, we at last heard light footsteps, and the door was suddenly opened by a little Indian girl, who ushered us into a large room, which, from the tables, chairs, and closets with china, we found to be the *salle à manger*. Here we had a full view of the interior; and the light which was burning in the adjacent rooms, showed us the occupants fast asleep. We had scarcely time to look around us, when a huge Californian, more than six feet in height, and proportionately large, stalked towards us in his shirt. His whole figure and countenance indicated a savage, and carried me back at once in idea to the Feejee cannibals. In a gruff tone he demanded our wants, and when he had satisfactorily ascertained who we were, and received a