

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers 1*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86)

Black Point — San Francisco — Santa Barbara

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The Bay of San Francisco, about sixty miles long from north to south, and with a width varying from four to fifteen miles, lies parallel to the shore of the Pacific Ocean, and separated from it by a strip of land varying from six to 12 miles across. This strip is cut at its narrowest point by a channel. This channel about two miles across at its entrance from the sea, narrows to less than a mile across, about three miles from the sea; and this narrow passage, between precipitous cliffs, is the Golden Gate. Vessels passing through the Golden Gate find themselves in the Bay, a vast harbor, absolutely land locked wherein all the shipping of the world could moor in perfect safety.

The entrance is so like a little cove, a mere indentation of the rocky shore, that this splendid harbor lay undiscovered and unknown for two centuries, while vessels were plying by it to and fro along the coast. In 1542, a Spanish exploring expedition went up the coast as far as lat. 44°. In 1579, Sir Francis Drake, having his fleet loaded with Spanish booty, explored the coast up to the present boundary of Oregon, looking for a channel which was supposed to connect the Pacific with the Atlantic. Turning to the south, he wintered behind Point Reyes, an exposed roadstead just thirty miles northwest of the entrance to San Francisco bay. Subsequently, Spanish galleons, from Manila, resorted to this bay of Sir Francis Drake, and a Spanish exploring expedition stopped there, but the Bay of San Francisco remained undiscovered. In 1769, a missionary traveling up along the coast was stopped by the channel of the Golden Gate, and discovered the Bay and its entrance. The bay was visited overland in 1772 and 1774. But it was not till 1775 that a vessel entered it.

The Golden Gate seems created for the purpose of military defense, as well as for commerce. Bordered on the north by precipitous mountain cliffs, and on the south by a rocky bluff 100 feet high, the entrance toward the bay commanded by high rocky islands, nature seems to have developed it with fortifications which need little but armament. The Government has made military reservations of these points and fortified them. Black Point, a rocky bluff, facing the island of Alcatraz, is garrisoned by a single company of artillery, and is the residence of the general commanding the military division of the Pacific, and one or two of the staff.

I went west by the Northern Pacific and took a steamer at Portland for San Francisco. I woke on the morning of 31st July as the steamer was touching the wharf. Friends met us, and we drove in the early morning through the city across a stretch of fine drifting sand, then by a sentry and through the gate-way into Black Point.

The portion occupied by the officers' quarters is surrounded by a lattice twenty feet high, covered by a mass of flowering vines. This, aided by a border and grove of Eucalyptus

trees, shields the place from the incessant winds. Within this blooming wall stretches a lawn of luminous green with banks and beds of flowers. A hedge of scarlet geranium covers the brink of the bluff, and over this wall of blazing color is seen a softened view of the bay, the islands, the farther shore, and the mountains beyond. It was pleasant to sit in an arbor on the edge of the precipice and idly watch the moving life in the bay, Italian fishermen in boats with lateen sails such as float by Capri, little craft with ribbed sails as we see in the pictures of Canton, for and aft vessels with one, two, three and four masts beating against the wind, yachts skimming over the waves, barks and full rigged ships and great hulls with four square rigged masts grandly moving into port or pulled out to see by tugs, steam ferries to all points on the Bay, [] on their course, and the great steamers to Portland, San Diego, Panama, Sandwich Islands and China and Japan towering above all. As the afternoon wore away we would hear faintly distant guns at Fort Point and Lime Point, the mirror reports at Angel Island, and the Presidio, a clashing report at Black Point, an answering boom from Alcatraz, and then the flags fluttered from their masts, and trumpets sounded, and the sun sank behind the ocean.

The annual competitive target practice was held while we were at Black Point. I went one morning to see the competitive skirmish firing. It was on the upland near the sea, in the morning before the wind grew strong, and before the driving fog had obscured the targets. A squad of five men was called out, and five targets were placed, one target for each man. They advanced in line till about 600 yards from the targets, at command they halted and fell flat on the ground. Five seconds were allowed them to estimate distance and adjust the sights. The bugle sounded "commence firing" and fifteen seconds later sounded "cease firing." At command they rose, advanced, dropped, and fired again till they arrived within about 200 yards of the targets when they returned, firing in the same way, to the starting point. One of the men that morning, corporal Hopkins, made five shots in each fifteen seconds, making, I believe, 45 in all. Of these twenty shots hit the bull's-eye, and the majority of the rest struck the circle next to the bull's-eye. Competitive matches for prize medals are held at division and department headquarters once every year. Practice goes on at the different posts throughout the year. The Army is becoming an organization of sharpshooters. If in some future war skirmish lines should be formed of men like corporal Hopkins, war would be fought under new conditions, and would require new tactics.

The officers of the posts about San Francisco have a club, which meets once a fortnight, to hear from one of the members a paper upon some military topic. There was one suggestion paper about the defense of San Francisco. There is one regular work, Fort Winfield Scott, near the water, on the southern shore of the Golden Gate. The walls are of brick masonry, eight feet through, and are armed with three tiers of guns. Besides this, there are guns in open battery lining the edge of the bluff above the fort on the opposite shore, both near the water, and higher up the mountain side, and on Angel Island, Alcatraz, and Black Point. The guns are mostly 10 to 15 inch smooth bores. This was a formidable armament not many years ago, and before the day of iron clads, no ship could pass these defenses. But things have changed. The navies of Europe now carry guns that send their missiles through walls of masonry 32 feet thick, and carry them on ships clad with armor that can not be penetrated by any known missile except at short range.

Against such ships, the defenses of San Francisco are harmless and helpless.

If the old smooth bores were replaced by such formidable guns as are now made, it would not be easy for any ship yet built, to force its way into the harbor. But guns now send a shell weighing 1900 pounds to a distance of 10 miles. The hostile ship might lay to four miles out at sea, and destroy San Francisco at leisure. Destroy at leisure, for a city is so large a mark it can be hit, while a ship is not easily hit at a distance of four miles on a billowy sea, and if hit, no missile known could fracture its armor at that distance. Hence such ports as Boston, New York, and San Francisco, close to the sea, can not be screened from bombardment by forts, but the enemy must be met and driven away by ships or torpedoes, or other floating and moving defenses.

While at Black point, I naturally had some talk about Army administration. For many years the heads of bureaus and departments at Washington have been gradually absorbing the administration of the Army in minute details. The Secretary of War, whose acts are the acts of the president, the commander-in-chief, has to sign every day piles of papers, prepared by Bureau officers which it is impossible for him to read. And if a question arise which he considers, the Bureau officers are at hand and the officers of the field cannot get a hearing.

Take, for example, the expenditure of money. The quartermaster General, for instance, in allocating funds to a department specifies in detail the particular purpose for which each portion is to be expended, and it can be spent for no other. The direction is not only so much for forage, so much for clothing, so much for building, so much for repairs etc., but so much for building and for repairs at each named post and not only that, but so much for building a designated structure, and so much for repair of a named house, and indeed it is often so much for a designated repair of the designated house. The appropriation by Congress is based on estimates sent by department commanders a year in advance, and as the appropriation is always less than asked for, the Quartermaster General, he in his office in Washington, or clerks in his office, must make a selection. It is impossible that after the lapse of a year, he can or they can make an adequate distribution. New emergencies arise; buildings are destroyed or injured by fire or tempest; circumstances may make necessary what was not thought of when the estimate was prepared. But there is no authority in the field to deviate from the distribution as awarded in Washington. Not long since, at the Presidio, the allotment from Washington appropriated money for putting in two bay windows in a certain house. But the occupant did not wish bay windows. There were other houses whose roofs had become leaky, and had cracks in the walls, through which wind and sand poured within. The occupants of these wanted their houses repaired; but the one had to submit to his house being torn up while bay windows were put in, and the others to endure the leaks and the wind. When a barn or stable, or storehouse is destroyed after the allotment is made the inconvenience is more serious. Sometimes the consequences of this centralization of details are more ludicrous than inconvenient. An officer at the Presidio wished a doorbell for his quarters, and made a requisition on the post quartermaster. The quartermaster had no doorbell. The question rose, could he purchase one? It was referred to a superior quartermaster and much considered. It was referred to other authority and worked its way to Washington, where it

was elaborately considered and made the subject of sundry reports. Three months after the requisition was made, an order came from Washington authorizing the purchase of the doorbell.

About the same time, the post commander at Fort Point found he needed wagon grease and had none. He made a requisition on the quartermaster, but there was none in store. He asked that sixty cents worth be purchased. There was no authority. But the wagon wheels were creaking and the request was forwarded in the due channel, and in two months an order came from Washington authorizing the purchase, after competitive bids should be solicited. Then after some dollars were spent and some days consumed in putting up posters, the sixty cents worth of grease was purchased, and the wheels ceased creaking.

The same minute bureau supervision is now extended to military operations. The reports of operations against the Indians in Arizona last spring and summer when sent to the adjutant of the army were handed by him to the Secretary of War. The Lieutenant General commanding the Army, in order to learn what the troops in the field were doing, had to send to the headquarters in California a personal request that duplicates of the reports be forwarded to him. Indians, after committing depredations betook themselves to the mountains. These constitute a region of jagged rock, intersected by deep ravines, and intricate passes, where waterholes are few and far between. In a pursuit in such a rugged labyrinth, wagons are impossible. Profiting by experience, the commanders in the exposed districts, some years ago established mule trains, which could carry supplies where troops went. The Bureau officers in Washington, finding these mules carried on the returns, and not being aware of their use, issued an order disbanding these flying teams, and requiring the mules to be sold. It simplifies the accounts in Washington to have it always known that there is a certain number of horses and no more in each district and department. Accordingly, an order was made that the service in New Mexico should have so many horses and no more; the service in Arizona so many and no more, and so with the other departments.

When the last Indian outbreak occurred, the troops could not move. There was no means of carrying forage or rations or ammunition. The allotted number of horses would only carry the men. The commander of the division had to strip another department of its horses, leaving the posts there helpless, borrowing the horses for Arizona so long as the hostilities should last, to be returned them in such condition as the campaign should leave them.

Fighting Indians in such a country is full of difficulty and privation. They in pursuit sometimes push 48 hours without halting to rest or sleep, and sometimes without water. Once, after such a march of even longer duration, they came upon the Indians in the night entrenched in the mountains, about the only water there was, and had to attack them at once and drive them. It must be confessed that the difficulties may be increased when these operations are carried on under directions sent by Bureau officers 3000 miles from the field.

San Francisco

It would be idle to attempt a history or description of San Francisco; I will only mention one or two points that struck me.

The people of San Francisco struck me as a metropolitan population. I received that impression, and visitors generally do. I am not entirely clear as to what I mean by "a metropolitan population", but I would say, the sort of people one would expect to meet in New York; or rather men such as you would expect to meet in business in New York. While the city has a population little if any above 300,000 it has many rich men. Half a dozen are said to have from \$20,000,000 to \$50,000,000 and many more are rated from \$1,000,000 to \$10,000,000. The people like to talk about millions and about large operations. San Francisco sends more students to Harvard than Cincinnati. Its population is made up of people from all the states in the union, and from all the continents. All parts of the world seem familiar there. Its direct trade is with New York and Alaska, Europe and Asia, the Sandwich Islands and Australia. The daily newspapers have items from all foreign parts quite full details from Panama, Honduras, and Guatemala; but I am not sure that I saw a mention of Ohio or Kentucky while I was there. The United States is only an item in the affairs of San Francisco. If the people seem Metropolitan, the city does not. The business portion, near the water, is indeed well-built of substantial brick three or four stories and some six story houses. It is some years since there was a severe shock of earthquake, and house owners are venturing to build more than two stories. But the dwellings of the city, covering the steep hills and ridges have the air of suburb rather than a metropolis. There are some costly dwellings. Half a dozen on Nob Hill are said to have cost from a million to more than a million and a half. But when a Friscan says Mr. Crocker's home cost \$1,500,000 and Mr. Hopkins a great deal more, I suppose that he means to say that the grounds, structure, furniture and works of art within it, altogether cost that. In that case, the exaggeration is not so stunning. But these houses are large. I was told they are painted every two years and each painting over costs \$4000. All the dwellings of San Francisco, including these great mansions and the little houses on the out skirts are built of red wood, are two stories with a basement, are covered with bay windows, and are painted with a heavy paint like cement. The high, steep hills, covered with these frame structures look like preparations for a gigantic bon fire. Yet I was surprised to learn that the rate of insurance was low. The fact is that red wood, the lumber of California, is absolutely free from resin and is not inflammable: that is, it will not blaze; it slowly chars and is easily extinguished. Such a thing as conflagration would be impossible.

The grip-cars are a feature of the city. They go so rapidly and smoothly, it is a pleasure to ride in them. There are always two cars. The front one is an open observatory car. I always took the front seat in it. Plunging down the steep declivities of Union Street, bracing myself and holding on, it seemed like coasting. They are now a convenience. When built, they made available for habitation a larger part of the city. When the city was

begun, a narrow strip of low land lay between the water and a range of abrupt, steep hills, rising to the height of 300 to 360 feet. The low land has been extended out into the water, making the business portion, and streets now go over the hills. Many of the streets are difficult, some of them impracticable for carriages. On some, the wooden sidewalks have slats nailed across to give foot hold to pedestrians. The grip cars give easy and pleasant access, and now the finest residences crown the summit.

I was there all August. I wore winter clothing all the time. There was a fire in the sitting room all the time. When I went out to drive in the afternoon, I had to put on an overcoat, muffle the neck and use a thick blanket lap robe. Yet all the while the garden was a mass of flowers and the market was splendid with strawberries and blackberries, plums and pears, peaches and nectarines, figs and grapes. This cold summer is not the climate of California, but the climate of San Francisco. It is confined to a narrow strip; a few miles in any direction takes one to true summer. The slopes of the mountains inland, heated by the summer sun, make an upward current of air, which, in the afternoon draws a stiff breeze landward from the ocean. The coastal range, 2000 feet high close to the shore, lifts the breeze above the low land of the valleys. But the Golden Gate, a cliff in the range, acts as a funnel, through which the sea breeze flows every afternoon like a gale, drawing the chill sea fog before it over the city. The residents of San Francisco migrate in summer to get warm. [The fruit and flowers of California are a joy for ever; they never cease blooming and ripening; strawberries are abundant nine months of the year.]

About 40,000 Chinamen live, exclusive occupants of a quarter that was formerly a choice part of the city, and is now called China Town. I passed through this quarter by day, a busy hive. Passing through the press, I could see customers chattering in the stores, and men closely packed in the workshops, cheerily doing their tasks. But it is the thing to visit China Town at night. Mr. Jackson, and attaché of the Palace Hotel who has made it his business for 12 years to guide visitors there, and who was in my Regiment, 20th Ohio, undertook to convey us. Besides my wife and myself were two gentlemen, making a party of four.

The streets were thronged; we were the only persons who were not Chinese. Many colored lanterns hung from the houses, and sounds of squeaking instruments and of gongs, mingled with squeaking falsetto voices issued from upper stories. We were assured that was the music of entertainments in progress. It happened to be the time of three days of festivities in honor of the coming of age of the Emperor of China. Every one quickly and courteously yielded places as our stalwart guide pushed a way for us through the crowd. The large stores had ceased business and the merchants and clerks stood within, gossiping. We went into some of the provision stores, where our guide brought out everything for our inspection. There were dried fish from China, ducks cleaned and pressed flat, dressed in oil and then dried, brought from China, strings of dried duck-legs, and other small anatomical collections, dried herbs and vegetables, dried and preserved fruits, all from China. Fresh eggs from China, large eggs prepared by being coated with glue, and then with black earth, so as to be quite impervious to air. So prepared, it is said they keep fresh for five years—to the taste of Chinamen, and no Christian has knowledge to the contrary. The fresh vegetables were raised from seed brought from China. The only

article not from China was fresh meat, and there was scant allowance of that. We went into an apothecary's. The proprietor, with a venerable air of dignified learning sat in a corner and looked over his huge round glasses with a smile of conscious superiority, as Jackson, rummaging through the boxes, brought out for our inspection bits of elk antlers, dried grasshopper legs, cockroach skins, dried spiders, dried roots and herbs, drugs to work on the bowels, and drugs to work on the imagination. We went next to see a new restaurant, just built, and to be opened to the public next day. The restaurants are mostly three stories high. In the ground floor at a counter, and around boxes and bales economical appetites are satisfied with cheap fare. The second story is neatly fitted up for the accommodation of guests who are ready to pay for comfort. The third story is splendid with carved furniture, carved and gilded screens, lacquered panels and oriental decoration, and with a balcony projecting over the street, adorned with flowering plants and gay lanterns; the resort for swell repasts.

We found in the upper story a state dinner in progress, given by a rich China merchant to a dozen of his friends and their wives, secure from intrusion, as the establishment was not yet open to the public. The men sat around a large round table which was covered with gaily decorated china. The wives sat on stools behind them. The ladies were brilliantly painted, and arrayed in silk robes and gold jewelry. The ladies munched melon seed and whispered while the men chatted, laughed and feasted, but occasionally a man would put a morsel into his wife's hand and quite a sensation was made when the host gave a box of confectionery to one of the lady guests.

We went next to the temple or joss house. It was simply the ground floor of a former dwelling or store. Passing through a vestibule, we saw against the rear wall, and facing the entrance, a shrine, with three large idols. Before each was an altar with joss sticks burning and offerings, apparently cups of tea and cups of rice. In a smaller room in the rear, were three other large idols. Our guide told us that these three were the wives of the three chief idols in the front room, and that the three chief gods were the only gods who ever married; that the principal one of the three chief gods is named Confucius, and many other details. But I did not put implicit faith in Jackson's knowledge of Chinese theology. The Joss House is a dingy room and untidy. The priest visits it only on funerals and uncertain ceremonial days. The custodian is always present and has on sale packages of joss sticks and packages of prayer paper, some prayers for ordinary devotion, some propitiatory for the dead. They are burned, and the prayers ascend with the smoke.

Further along the streets we entered a long, dark passage and found at the other end a small, dark, damp court. My wife remained with my two friends while I crossed the court. Jackson opened the door, and we found ourselves in a room like the cabin of a boat, lined to the ceiling with bunks, leaving no unoccupied space but a few square feet about the door. On every bed was a recumbent Chinaman. Some were adjusting opium in their pipes. Some were smoking holding the opium in a bowl against the flame of a lamp. Some had smoked and were lying in stupor. It was a forbidding site. The guide said this was a very mild specimen, and passing further on, opened another door. Nothing could be seen but dense smoke; a faint, diffused glare showed there was a light somewhere within. I did not care to enter.

After a while we turned from the thoroughfare into a narrow cross-street, but as thronged as the rest, and entering a door descended a stairway, passed through a long, narrow, intricate passage, ascended a narrow, ladder like stairway and found ourselves in a room crowded with Chinamen in costume. Crossing through the throng and through a doorway, we passed on to the stage of the theater. The house was packed with an audience all Chinese, all orderly, still, absorbed in the play. We remained on the stage, and took seats at one side. There was apparently a mandarin or other holding some sort of court. Persons were apparently brought before him, examined, harangued, sentenced, and dragged away. These disappeared, and some, apparently military personages appeared, strutted, declaimed and strode away. Then came what we took to be generals, gorgeously attired in robes of lustrous silk, stiff with gold embroidery and with feathers of preposterous length in their helmets. Each was followed by an array which presumably represented an army. There was much bitter speaking, looks of lofty contempt, fingers pointing derision, scowls of wrath, and the battle began; that is, the two generals set to. They fenced, and leaped about drew back each pirouetted on one foot, and rushed together in mortal combat. Finally, one was typically slain, and gracefully helped from the stage; while his army accompanied as captives, and the other party followed in triumph. Then appeared an aged man in attire of bewildering splendor, accompanied by one dressed as a coolie. The grand personage declaimed in high falsetto, and an intoning or semi chant. The Cooley spoke in natural voice and tone. He seemed to be deprecating the displeasure of the other. Every time he spoke, there was a ripple of laughter in the audience. That rippling laugh was the only sound that came from the audience.

The entire performance was accompanied by an orchestra which occupied the rear of the stage. There were gongs, cymbals, triangles, kettle drum and a strange instrument, and inchoate violin with three or four high shrill notes. The performers played with vigor and enthusiasm and kept perfect time. To a person who likes Chinese music, it was undoubtedly fine music.

From the theater we went to a restaurant and took a table by the balcony in the upper story. We had heard such distracting accounts of Chinese hash and stews and [], that it was a great relief to find our little supper was simply of preserved ginger and citron, dried and preserved Chinese fruits, almond cakes and delicious tea.

Santa Barbara

There were friends at Santa Barbara whom we could not leave the Pacific Coast without visiting. One afternoon we left San Francisco in the Santa Rosa, a long, narrow steamer, much given to rolling. I was sitting in the smoking room near the stem when we passed out to sea. A child came tottering into the room, and immediately began rolling over the floor. A tall, stout man standing earnestly reading a placard on the wall, dropped into a seat with a bounce. The rattling conversation that had been going on, became languid, and subsided. One who had been almost boisterous in his merriment became grave, turned pale, and rushed from the room. I walked forward to our state room, and found my wife leaning pensively over the railing. Through the open door, I saw my son, what

remained of him, lying white on his bed. Still he called me to read to him. I began to read the composing pages of Sandford and Merton, when I came to remember that I had eaten crabs for lunch. They had certainly become aware of the rolling of the ship, that they were over their native element. I felt their claws crawling up, and rushed to the ship's side just as they escaped into the sea.

In the afternoon of the next day, we turned Point Conception and the coastline which had been north and then became east and west. From sailing south we turned due east, and gliding over smooth water, about sunset drew alongside the long pier which juts out from Santa Barbara. A strip of semi tropical verdure there lies between the blue sea and the violet mountains. It recalls the Italian shore of the Mediterranean. An officer in the Navy who had visited California said to his brother as they sailed by the shore near Monterey “see that view, that is Santa Barbara.”

The streets are bordered with the pepper tree, the foliage of Greece. In gardens, palms spread their feathery leaves, and the stately Norfolk Island pine rears its spire above the fig and almond. The land about the town is covered for miles and miles with beautiful grounds; the higher-level gleams with orange grove, and lemon, lime, and olive. The hill slopes are clad with vineyards.

Our friends took possession of us. We drove along the beach with the surf rolling up to the horses feet on to the promontory, which, jutting out, gives unsurpassed views of sea and valley, and mountain. We drove up the mountain side and looked down upon the country as a map. We lunched with our friends at their vine-embowered cottage, on the foot-hills. We lunched with them in the forest on the mountain-side. They knew everybody and we drove into every place where there was some rare flower, some special tree, or view, and to see some special people.

The population of Santa Barbara, the people whom we see, are an exceptional congregation. Officers of the Army retired on half pay; southern planters wrecked in the war who have come hither to plant oranges and olives instead of cotton, invalids from every state who have traveled the world over come to Santa Barbara for rest and recuperation. It is a society of culture, leisure, and moderate income. There is no feverish struggle for riches, office or fame. They are there to get life and calmly enjoy it. No one has anything else he has to do. No one is in a hurry. If something is not done today, well, no matter, tomorrow will do as well, – or next month. In that delightful climate, life is a peaceful, happy dream. Blessed Santa Barbara.