

Near the middle of the descent—that is, close to the corner where you alighted last evening—is a tall liberty-pole a little storm-eaten and half dismantled, like the liberty-poles of old country-places in the East; a town-pump which yields the very sweetest of water; a gilded public-house sign swung in the old-fashioned way at the corner, so that it may be read from four approaches; and a number of fresh, green locust-trees whose thrifty leaves spread a grateful shade all over the narrow way. So neighborly is the place that, when the butcher has occasion to know the time, he hails the watch-maker across the street, who, putting his head over his glass screen, says, half-past eight and be hanged to him; at this pleasantry half the street bursts into a loud laughter, which is increased to a roar when the butcher is heard to reply that if he hung he didn't know what would become of the watch-maker, giving the town to understand thereby that the artificer was a steady debtor to him, and would die of starvation if he (the butcher) were extinct. A trial of strength between two dogs is sure to bring every shopkeeper out, and, if a half-drunken tippler sings a rollicking song or a hasty mother scolds her youth in the privacy of her back-yard, the chances are excellent that Dutch Flat hears every word.

The town has no fire-engine. For defense against conflagration a heavy head of water is laid on from the mountains, and is brought into the streets by means of small iron hydrants, similar to those used in the cities. At about noon on each hot day, "Ike," a lean, self-contained man, who always has a portion of a cigar in his mouth, brings a short length of hose into the main street, and adjusting it to all the hydrants he can find, one after the other, beginning at the bottom of the street, he sprinkles everything that he can reach with the stream, producing a grateful change in the heated air, and creating something of a breeze. If a saloon-keeper is desirous of a little more water than common, he simply guesses out loud that "that piazzar up there 'u'd stan' a duckin'"; and if a good lady has a favorite tree that needs reviving, she presents her smiling face above the top of her gate, and charmingly wonders if Ike could "jest play a stream onto that pore sufferin' thing to git it out of misery." No one presumes to give him orders. He is on a level with the best, and shares the great politeness that is characteristic of the place.

As you ascend to the upper part of the town, you are likely to be pleased and a little surprised at the neatness and prettiness of the cottages you find there. Built mostly in the midst of little lawns, shaded with trees and running vines, they are models of what they assume to be—houses of people in moderate circumstances. It is not likely that any one of them cost more than three thousand dollars, yet a little good taste having been employed, and Nature having been invited, they fill their measure thoroughly. From their trellised porches roses of all hues hang in the utmost profusion; the windows are screened with lace; garden-chairs are placed in the grass beneath the locusts, and the

doors are open through and through, permitting the breezes to sweep everywhere. You are sure to hear the voices of children and the songs of hidden birds at any hour, and the air is always fragrant with the odor of flowers. Were one to descend upon this spot from the clouds, he would never guess that he was in Dutch Flat, in California.

It is natural to dwell upon the graceful feature of the town after one has caught a glimpse of its surroundings, for it may be fairly doubted if there is in the country another place with features in close juxtaposition so utterly dissimilar, so startlingly in contrast, and yet belonging so intimately to each other.

Keeping on up the hill, you soon emerge from among the houses and the grateful shade-trees, and suddenly find yourself in a hot and glaring desert. All about you are stones, heaps of whitish gravel, bowlders of immense size, and high cliffs of bare earth full of seams and gullies. Here, for the first time, you find yourself upon mining-ground.

The method of hydraulic mining is briefly this: From some lofty point a head of water is let on through iron pipes of varying diameter, and is projected in a thin stream against the bottom of a hill of gravel known to contain gold. The earth falls in loosened masses, and is washed into channels which lead to sluice-boxes. A sluice-box is a narrow trough made of planks and provided with a false bottom. Over the upper surface the current of earth and water passes, the finer portions of the gravel, together with what gold there may be, falling through apertures upon the real bottom below. Here at intervals are cross-pieces a few inches high, in whose angles quicksilver is placed. The particles of gold, great and small, draw to this, while the worthless earth is washed on and out of the way. These sluice-boxes are watched night and day, and are "cleared up," that is, the amalgam is taken out, at intervals which vary from ten days to three months or more, just as the earth is more or less rich in metal.

The pipes which convey the water are made of thin iron hardly thicker than box cardboard, and vary from some forty inches to fifteen in diameter. They are smooth, round, and black as jet. They are led across depressions in the ground upon trestles, and, where the surface is favorable, they are laid upon sleepers like the tracks of a railway. They are often miles in length, and, though their general tendency is downward, yet they make many rises and turns. The pipe near by you disappears a short distance off, behind a low hillock; it comes into view again two or three rods farther on; then it is lost for a quarter of a mile, and you see it climbing a hill like a serpent, bending itself over the crest, and vanishing once more; then, perhaps, you may see it in the faint distance curving like a hair-line, still doing its tremendous duty, yet with so little suggestion of the great power contained within it.

You bend down and apply your ear to a little orifice you find upon the upper side of one of these