1852-1854 Henry H. Murray Incoming Letters

San Francisco than in any city in the Union of the same size. There has lately been a good deal of trouble between the squatters and the owners of property, which has made unimproved lots unsaleable, & somewhat diminished the rage for speculation in town lots; improved property known is very safe. San Francisco is a funny place. One of its most remarkable features is the conglomeration of the natives of all parts of the world which it contains. Numbers of French & Germans, crowds of Spaniards & natives of all parts of both North America, a sprinkling of natives of all the Islands of the Pacific, and what is the most striking a large number of Chinese with their long tails and meaningless faces. Some parts of the town are occupied exclusively by them and their signs are very peculiar, such as Chang Po, Wash house, Sing Lee old clothes &c.

I spent a week in San Francisco quite pleasantly, and without the enormous expense which generally attends a sojourn there, for Halleck had very kindly left his rooms for me, and my numerous friends then would not allow me to take a meal at a Restaurant when I did have that indulgence. However I found that a mutton chop, some potatoes, & a little simple dessert cost a dollar & a half and a breakfast of Salmon, chop, two eggs & coffee with rolls was $2. – In making a close calculation of office rent, board & pay for the furniture in the fall, most likely I shall not be able to live in San Francisco for less than $500 per annum. So I must be very certain of a good practice there, or of an income from rents or interest before I venture to go there to live. This is a very quiet place, we have very nice quarters and as provisions are now not very expensive in this Country, living is not very dear. Our voyage out here was rather barren of incident; we had remarkably smooth weather on both sides of the continent. Our trip across the Isthmus was rather exciting. The great bugbear of the voyage was the getting your little pet Miss Lina Jones across the Isthmus and we were almost disappointed at finding it so easy. Mrs J. had a basket made in Baltimore in the shape of a wash boat with a cover & handles like a clothes basket, two natives were hired who carried her along in this basket, threading a stick through the handles, the motion of swinging and of easy propulsion was so grateful to the little lady, that she slept all the way over & afterwards would not be contented out of her basket so we had to swing it in the stateroom for her to sleep in at night; Johnny Simpson was brought over on a mule in front of a native & found it very good fun, particularly when laughing and talking to the man about the mule, when I overtook him on one occasion, having ridden ahead of the ladies, in order to relieve the poor little fellow's fears at being alone with a native who spoke only Spanish. I rode back to help