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tion of middle-class America, represent a variety of folklore that has never been thoroughly explored.

1. LAND OF THE SUNDOWN SEA

The early tourists in Southern California could never quite decide how to label the region. It was "A Mediterranean land without the marshes and malaria"; "The American Italy"; "The New Palestine"; "The New Greece"; "A geographical Pleiades"; "The Land of the Sundown Sea"; "The Land of Sunshine"; "Poppy Land"; "The Better Italy"; "Our Italy"; "The Mentone of America"; a land with a "climate of Laodicean equability." In conning the European guidebooks for references which might fit the new environment, the labeling process became curiously mixed and confused. Santa Barbara County, wrote one early tourist, was a combination of all the scenic wonders of Europe. Its mountains "were Swiss, its valleys Scottish, its bay that of Naples." Charles Loring Brace, a visitor of 1869, wrote an entire chapter to prove, by Biblical references, that Southern California was "the American Palestine." Did not the mustard grow almost as tall as a tree "for the fowls of the air to lodge under the shadow of it"? Did not the region have deserts in which "heaven was as brass, and the earth as iron"? Here were the vineyards, the fig trees, the almonds and olives of Syria. Like Palestine, Southern California had "dead seas," "saliferous vegetations," and "the hot springs of Tiberias." The bolder impressionists, on the other hand, discarded all allusions and proclaimed their belief that Southern California "manufactures its own weather and refuses to import any other."

In these early impressions one can sense the thrill of discovery, the appeal of the exotic, the gradual relaxation of frontier-taut nerves. "Immediately after passing Point Concepcion," wrote one tourist, "we realize that we have come into a Southern clime; and we almost seem to see a distinct line of demarcation separating the northern gloom from the southern glamour. Then at once we begin to see the porpoises playing about, and the flying fish springing out of the water, and looking just like rainbow gossamer as the sunlight catches them. Then we begin to have exaggerated hopes of the beauty of the country awaiting us; for all unconsciously we are filled with a sensuous delight in the genial warmth and glow and tender colouring. . . . The mountains look at their very best towards the hour of sunset and after the setting of the sun, all the crudeness and harshness

"Southern California was the first tropical land which our race has mastered and made itself at home in."

—Charles Nordhoff

CHAPTER VI

THE FOLKLORE OF CLIMATOLOGY

THE popular discovery of "semi-tropical" Southern California, which began in the 'seventies, coincided with important changes in the national economy. The frontier was rapidly vanishing, industrialism was on the march, and a new middle class had begun to appear in American life. The moment had arrived when the more fortunate elements of this new middle class had begun to reach out for wider horizons. An urge to travel was in the air. A great pent-up longing for the bizarre, the novel, the exotic clamored for release. Unlike their colleagues on the eastern seaboard, the mid-America sections of this new middle class were intimidated by the thought of the Atlantic crossing. Italy, France, and Spain seemed forbiddingly remote. They wanted an Italy nearer home—an Italy without the Italians, an Italy in which they could feel at home, an Italy in which, perhaps, they might settle and live out their days in the sun.

Representing mid-America's first contact with the exotic in environments, it is not surprising that some amazing enthusiasms, misconceptions, and exaggerations should have found reflection in the first popular impressions of Sunny California. Later these exaggerated enthusiasms were put to good use by the ingenious promoters of the region, but, at the outset, it was the newcomers, the tourists, who taught the Southern Californians the art of overstatement. These early impressions, these first imprints of the exotic upon the imagina-

of their features are tempered and softened by the tender glow and glamour." In literally hundreds of similarly lush impressions one can see the psyche of mid-America stirring faintly to new life, warming to the new environment like frostbitten hands to a beaming hearth. "I have apparently found a Paradise on Earth," wrote another tourist. "The road to it, like that to the Upper Paradise, is long and stony and tedious, but when you arrive the pain of striving is forgotten in the beatitude of possession."

The climate of this western paradise was so novel that it gave rise to a new interpretative "science" of "climatology," by which its marvelous, wonder-working propensities might be catalogued and indexed. Elsewhere in the general westward movement of settlers, "climate" was regarded as a hostile element, a fit subject for curses and wisecracks, but, in Southern California, it became a major obsession. As nearly as I can discover, the miraculous qualities of the climate were invented, not by the cynical residents of the region, but by the early tourists. To be sure, the local residents soon began to take these inventions seriously, but the inventions themselves belonged to the tourists, not to them.

After exploring Southern California at some length, Dr. William A. Edwards, an early tourist, concluded that its climate could relieve, and possibly cure, the following ailments: incipient phthisis, chronic pneumonia, tuberculosis, disease of the liver, malarial poisoning, cirrhosis of the liver, jaundice, functional female disturbances, the organic ills of advanced years, simple congestion of constipation, hepatic catarrh, scrofulous affections, insomnia, and enlarged glands. Scarlet fever and diphtheria, it was confidently reported, were unknown south of Tehachapi, and "epidemics seldom occur." The enthusiastic Charles Dudley Warner stated that "diseases of the bowels are practically unknown; children cut teeth here without trouble; and disorders of the liver and kidneys are rare." The Southern California Medical Society appointed a committee to list the ailments that could be cured by the climate and scores of booklets were published with such titles as "A Study of Riverside Climate with Suggestions as to its Adaptability to Cases of Phthisis."

So widespread was the enthusiasm for "climatology" that the enthusiasm itself was dubbed "the Southern California fever." Taking cognizance of this fever which seemed to affect every incoming tourist, a Santa Barbara editor caustically observed that "the climate of

Santa Barbara is a big thing. There is apparently nothing like it in the known world. It cures the consumption. It knocks the asthma. It is a bad thing on catarrh." In fact, throughout these early impressions the cynicism of the local residents runs as an undercurrent of skeptical comment. Asked if the climate of Southern California was good for invalids, one local editor replied: "No, sir, but I think it is a pleasant place in which to be sick, and, when my appointed time comes, an easy spot in which to die. For you die not in a pent-up Northern home begging for air, but you die in the open air, and vanish ere your friends know it." At a later date, however, the local residents began to defend the climate with greater vehemence than the tourists. Addressing the American Medical Association meeting in 1891, a Dr. Capen of Omaha had said that "California was a cloud of dust in May." The slander did not go unchallenged, for Dr. Henry Gibbons, Jr., replied: "If his brain were as cloudless as California, he would neither live in Omaha nor permit his tongue to wag such a deceit."

To appreciate the enthusiasm of the early tourists for the climate of Southern California, it should be recalled that, in the 'sixties, 'seventies, and 'eighties, there was more incipient and chronic invalidism in America than one can possibly imagine today. Whether due to dietary deficiencies, overwork, the lack of sanitation, the low state of the medical art, or whatever causes, the fact is that the newspapers of the period give one the impression of a nation afflicted with creaking joints, rheumatic limbs, catarrhal colds, and a host of mysterious "ailments" and "afflictions." Reading lush accounts of the climate of Southern California, these ailing Middle Westerners set forth in droves for the promised land. In fact, the presence of so many invalids eventually became a source of great embarrassment.

By 1880 the whole foothill district around Sierra Madre and San Gabriel was "one vast sanatorium." As early as 1869, the City of Los Angeles had begun to complain of the cost involved in providing medical care and hospital treatment for indigent invalids. It would seem that almost one out of three of the early tourists were, as they phrased it, "run down," "consumptive," or "ailing." A character in an early novel by Mrs. Charles Steward Daggrett (*Mariposilla*, 1895) observes: "We jump at the chance to dance once in a while with a man who is not delicate, who has never had a hemorrhage or organic trouble. Of course, we do have a few sound men." Enjoying the

spectacle of a Southern California overrun with invalids, out-of-state newspapers developed the practice of referring to the region as "the sanitarium and fruit country." The editor of a Denver newspaper in 1885 pointed out that "the moist, warm, enervating climate of Southern California, instead of making real sanitariums, makes simply soothing death-beds for those who are beyond recovery." So famous did the "climatology" of Southern California become that Horace A. Vachell, the British novelist, who lived in the region for several years, wrote in 1904 that "in a country where sickness was once almost unknown, doctors, dentists, faith-healers, and quacks multiply and increase as the quails of yore."

That Los Angeles was not bankrupted by the burden of providing medical care for transients seems to be explained by the circumstance that so many invalid tourists died shortly after their arrival. One tourist of 1887 wrote to relatives in the East: "Should we attend the funerals of all the invalid strangers who die here, we should do little else." Slight wonder, then, that Southern California should have become a paradise for morticians or that faith-healing should still flourish in the land of the sundown sea. The same circumstance probably accounts for the ease with which the fact of death is accepted in the region. "California," wrote Mrs. Daggett, "is not the place to mourn in. The climate is opposed to dejection. The natives go to funerals in the morning and chase with the hounds in the afternoon." To this day, funerals remain rather gala occasions in Southern California.

Taking notice of the fact that so many invalids were coming to Southern California, E. P. Roe, the novelist—ironically enough, also a Christian Science practitioner in Santa Barbara—published a letter in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* suggesting some of the medicinal precautions that should be observed by the wary traveler. Such a traveler, he wrote, "should always carry something with him to guard against constipation. A sedlitz powder, a tea-spoonful of Rochelle salt, or a tablespoonful of Hunyadi Janos taken before breakfast, is a simple and efficient preventive. A bottle of paregoric, a bottle of aromatic spirits of ammonia, and a flask of good whiskey are, likewise, excellent things to carry in a satchel." Once arrived in Southern California, of course, the tourist could safely discard these medicants. By 1870 climate had become a merchantable commodity in the region.

In the classic expression of the time, "we sold them the climate and threw the land in."

2. A SLIGHT EXAGGERATION

In the 'eighties it began to be said that Southern Californians "irrigate, cultivate, and exaggerate." Nor was it only the climate that was reported with some slight exaggeration. In particular the products of the soil, its Brobdingnagian vegetables, loomed larger than life in the tourist reports. One reads of tomato vines nineteen feet high; of cabbage plants that grew twenty feet in the air; of strawberries so big that they could only be consumed by three large bites; of cucumbers seven feet long; of horseshoe geraniums "as big as small trees" growing in hedges six feet high; of a Gold of Ophir rosebush in Pasadena with 200,000 blossoms; of a grapevine in Santa Barbara that, in 1896, bore twelve tons of grapes; of squash that weighed three hundred pounds; of daisies that grew on bushes as large as quince trees and of lilies fourteen feet high.

"Do you suppose there is a modest daisy in Southern California?" asks a character in *The Leaven of Love* (1908) by Clara Burnham. "Well, I guess not. They're on a level with your eyes, and stare at you as bold as brass. Here the geraniums climb right out of the ground up to the bedrooms and snoop around the windows. In the east, we carry a palm-leaf fan to church. Here, they crackle away up in the air, big enough for a giant to use." For the benefit of his eastern readers, the ebullient George Wharton James reported: "There are calla lilies by the acre, and tall enough to be picked by a man on horseback; hedges of geraniums, fifteen feet high; rods and rods of carnations and pinks; heliotrope grown into trees, forty feet high; roses of a thousand varieties, by the million, it being no rare thing to see a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, or more, buds and blossoms and full blown roses on a single bush at the same moment." Once the visitor to paradise has returned to his home in the East, wrote James, he will ask: "Is this the land I have left behind? Is this the land I used to know? And be contented with? Am I the same man I was? . . . Here, winter scarce seems to have stepped aside."

One story, related by Kate Sanborn, had to do with a man who was once standing on top of a California pumpkin chopping off a piece with an axe. Suddenly the axe fell in the pumpkin. The man there-

upon pulled up his ladder and put it down inside the pumpkin and descended to look for his axe. While groping around, he met another man, who exclaimed: "Hello! What are you doing here?" "Looking for my axe," was the reply. "Gosh! You might as well give that up. I lost my horse and cart in here three days ago, and haven't found 'em yet." "Mustard?" said a resident in response to a tourist's question, "Why, man, people nowadays don't know what mustard is. In those days, it used to cover the plains. A man on horseback could ride out of it, and you would never see him coming. When Uncle Billy Spurgeon bought the land for the founding of Santa Ana, the mustard was so thick and high that he had to climb a sycamore tree so he could see the tract he had bought."

It was not only the size but the rapidity with which things grew in Southern California that amazed the newcomers. "If you want to pick a melon in this country," wrote Charles Dudley Warner, "you have to get on horseback." The growth of melons was supposed to be so rapid, in fact, that they were bruised on the ground as they were pulled and bumped along by the rapid growth of the vine. On the fertility of the soil, B. A. Botkin reports an interesting item. "The soil of the Southern California counties is so rich as to become an actual detriment to the farmer," observed a local resident. "In San Bernardino, a farmer, named Jones, has been forced entirely to abandon the culture of corn, because the stalks, under the influence of the genial sun, mild air, and mellow soil, shoot up into the air so fast that they draw their roots after them; when, of course, the plant dies as a rule. Cases have been known where cornstalks thus uprooted and lifted into the air, have survived for some time upon the climate alone."

Here "the rank growth of fruit and flowers," as Frank Lewis Nason pointed out in a novel (*The Vision of Elijah Beal*, 1905), "a growth roused from its fiery sleep, strove in a day to make up for ages of helplessness bondage." Delayed by the long dry season, nature had to work quickly in Southern California after the rains came. The wonderful lush growth was "tenfold more wonderful because of that burnt and dried-up soil from which nothing beautiful seemed possible." In many cases, however, the size and rapidity with which things grew in Southern California conveyed a sense of unreality so overpowering as to make the visitors feel unhappy and profoundly disconcerted. "It's a fraud, a deception," complains a character in one novel.

"There's one word that ought to be written across the whole of Southern California, and that word is Humbug! Nothing really gets into your heart and soul because you know it all ain't so. All those painted palm trees and muslin roses on the stage aren't one bit more imitation than those you see here. Yes, ma'am, every slightly thing there is in this part of the world was planted here by the hand of man. It's all exaggerated and showy. . . . I never go out here without feeling as if I was play-acting."

Not only were miraculous curative qualities attributed to the climate, but Southern California was a land in which natural disasters were unknown. There were no thunderstorms or cyclones or tornadoes; no snow nor ice nor sleet; and, above all, no mud. "Here," wrote one observer, "is a climate of the tropics without its perils; here is the fertility of Egypt without its fellaheen; the fruits and flowers of Sicily without its lazzaroni; the beauty of Italy without its limited markets; the sunshine of Persia without its oppressions." "The visible wrath of God," wrote one tourist, "is not to be found here: no one ever froze or roasted to death." Sunstrokes and frozen limbs were unknown. "The blast of the wild horn of the mosquito," reported Major Ben C. Truman, "is forgotten music here." The loyalty shown this blessed land of the sun by the tourists is without precedent or parallel. While there were fogs, a fog was nothing—"merely a thin vapor." And while there was a rainy season, the Creator had providentially provided that most of the rain should fall at night so that the days would be bright and clear. In fact, the folk belief that most of the rain falls at night is still widely accepted in the region. Was the climate, perhaps, monotonous? "No," replied one tourist, "the perfect oratorio is being performed—why desire a discord to break in?" Southern California was a land where iceboxes and furnaces were unknown, where mildew never gathered, and where mad dogs did not roam the land. It was a land in which there were no traps or pitfalls, no beasts of prey, no poisonous reptiles, no loathsome pests. While the early Spanish chronicles contain numerous references to earthquakes, the very word "earthquake" disappeared from the vocabulary of the region. In much the same manner, the disappearance of the word "flea" after 1870 constitutes a major phenomenon.

For years the favorite form of greeting exchanged in Southern California was: "Have the chinchies disturbed you much?" Reference to fleas appear in the diary of Father Crespi (1769) and in the journal

of La Perouse (1786). The activity of the flea is reflected in several place-names in California: Alameda de las Pulgas, the Rancho de las Pulgas, and so forth. "I could not sleep," wrote Alfred Robinson; "the blankets pricked my flesh, the room was warm, and at times it would seem as if a thousand needles penetrated my legs and sides. They were fleas indeed! And it appeared to me as if they came in armies to glut their appetites with human blood! It was terrifying, for I thought they would surely suck me dry before morning." "If any sinning soul ever suffered the punishments of purgatory," wrote Edwin Bryant, "before leaving the tenement of clay, those torments were endured by myself last night." William Redmond Ryan, visiting California in 1850, wrote of "fleas of so large a growth, and of so voracious a propensity, I never wish to see, much less to feel." Bayard Taylor wrote that than the California flea "nothing is more positively real to the feelings, and nothing more elusive and intangible to the search." Carl Meyer speaks melodramatically of "these body beasts, more effective than the quintessence of Spanish pepper" and refers to "flea fever" as a common malady in California. The French traveler, Earnest de Massey, boasted that he had "slaughtered enough of the creatures to fill a large graveyard." "The California flea," wrote Frank Marryat, "is unlike both in appearance and manner, the modest flea of ordinary life, that seeks concealment as by accident it is unearthed. These insects, reared in the rough school of bullocks' hide, boldly faced as they attacked us." William Taylor, the minister, referred to the California fleas as "the third plague of Egypt. They live on the ground like little herds of wild cattle." Yet one may search the tourist letters, pamphlets, and books written after 1870 and never find a reference to the flea. After they had lived in the land for a short time, however, the tourists quickly discovered the flea. "You can go to the California beaches," it was once said, "and take up a handful of sand and the fleas will kick it all away by the time they get out."

3. THE LAND OF UPSIDE DOWN

Almost every aspect of life in Southern California possessed a delightful novelty—an element of surprise—for the tourists. They wrote to relatives, with excited wonder, of rivers that had heads but no mouths; of rivers with "their bottoms on top" which disappeared in the sands "as though ashamed of such sportive energy in a land of

sacred indolence"; of rivers that seemed to disappear but which really ran underground. "Why, there's so much sand and so little water mostly, they have to sprinkle the river bed to keep it from flyin' about the landscape." They wrote of rivers so dry that "coyotes had to carry canteens when they crossed them"; or they reported that the "jack-rabbits used to carry water on their backs most of the time." To their amazement they discovered that umbrellas were useless against the drenching rains of Southern California but that they made good shade in the summer; that many of the beautifully colored flowers had no scent; that fruit ripened earlier in the northern than in the southern part of the state; that it was hot in the morning and cool at noon, or, as they said, "you roast on the sunny side and freeze on the shady side of the street"; that people went to the mountains to bore tunnels for water and dug in the valleys for greasewood to burn as fuel; and, to their complete amazement, they discovered that Reno, Nevada, was west of Los Angeles. Here, in this paradoxical land, rats lived in the trees and squirrels had their homes in the ground. "How intense everything is in Southern California!" wrote Kate Douglas Wiggin. "The fruit so immense, the cañons so deep, the trees so big, the hills so high, the rain so wet, and the drought so dry!" There were more rivers and less water, more cows and less butter, and more creed but less religion, wrote one tourist, than in any region on the face of the earth.

There was some elusive quality about the region that completely baffled them. "There seems to exist in this country," wrote Emma H. Adams, a visitor from Cincinnati, "a something which cheats the senses. Whether it be in the air, the sunshine, in the ocean breeze, I can not say. . . . There is a variety in the evenness of the weather, and a strange evenness in this variety, which throws an unreality around life, and not more, so far as I can learn, in the case of persons especially affected by climatic influences than those whose feelings do not rise and fall with the thermometer. . . . All alike walk and work in a dream. For something beguiles, deludes, plays falsely with the senses. It makes only a trifling difference how close one applies one's self, the effect is the same: there is no awareness of the passage of the day. In Cincinnati I would have sensed the going by of nine honest, substantial hours; but here I do not." The effect, she noted, was "new and peculiar and wonderful." Always uncertain about the season of the year or the time of day, she wrote, with a shrewdness

rare among tourists, that her "indefinite ideas of the days and the season are due, certainly in part, to the slight change which marks the seasons, with scores upon scores of days and nights being alike as to warmth, brightness, and beauty."

Doctors and amateur climatologists were put to work, at an early date, to help the newcomer to understand the nature of fogs. For example, Dr. S. P. Ford divided Southern California fogs into two general categories: some were high and dry, others were low and wet. It was only with the latter type, frequently rare, that it became necessary "to have a little fire in the house." There were, he explained, five types of "foggy" days and it was grossly inaccurate, not to say misleading, to use a single term to characterize these variations. "A foggy morning" was one in which the fog came up during the night and disappeared before seven o'clock. If the fog continued until noon, the day should be characterized as "foggy and misty." "Cloudy foggy weather" implied that it had been more or less foggy during a part of the day. "Foggy and misty," on the other hand, implied that it had almost rained, while "dense fog in the night" meant precisely what the term implied. After a season or two, the tourists became somewhat sophisticated and told their relatives in the East that there were two seasons in Southern California: the wet season in which it may rain but seldom does, and the dry season in which it cannot rain, but sometimes does. What is rain and what is fog remains, however, a moot question in the region. Some years ago, one local weather bureau contended that .01-inch precipitation was merely "fog," while another bureau, with equal firmness, continued to report .01-inch precipitation as "rain." As I write these lines, I have before me a local newspaper with the familiar headline: "L. A. Wet Mist Will Stay."

The tourists were equally surprised by the curious assortment of people they encountered in Southern California. "Here a community of Eastern people, there one of Southern, and not remote from either a Mexican settlement, and each has its own peculiarities." The country, wrote one observer, was very much like Jacob's cattle, "ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted." It wasn't like the rest of the country; it was *sui generis*. After desperately attempting to explain the strange social scene in Southern California, the same observer finally abandoned the effort with the remark, "It is easy to say much about the land, but difficult to say it so as to be clearly understood."

The realization that Southern California was a paradoxical land with a tricky environment, that all was not quite as it seemed, usually began to dawn in the consciousness of the tourist about the time he had learned to discard the carriage robes, umbrellas, and overshoes he had brought across the continent. And with this realization, the tourists began to feel homesick. "I sort of miss Montana in the summer," remarks a character in Myron Brinig's novel *The Sisters*. "I never get used to California. Of course it is beautiful, but I sort of miss the seasons. Here, you never know if it's summer or winter." "They fail to get that home feeling," wrote Sidney H. Burchell, the English novelist, "and want to go back east after the novelty of Californian life has worn off. Some seem to regard existence here as camping out, and never make a real home, living in their trunks for years. Even those that have homes are making changes all the time, trading one for another, or building afresh. Yes, really, it's almost like living in a big tent, with houses instead of canvas tents."

One fear about the climate continued to haunt the tourists and immigrants: the fear of enervation. "I have heard that every one deteriorated in Southern California," wrote Julia M. Sloane in one of the tourist books. Even this fear, however, they were inclined to rationalize. It was the surpassing beauty of the land "that disarms energy." While not exactly enervating, observed Charles Dudley Warner, "the climate does produce a certain placidity which might be taken for laziness." But this feeling would somehow vanish once the energetic Yankees took firm possession of the land. One observer concluded that the climate was not really enervating but that one merely got this impression from "the low educational and moral status of the native population." "A combined immigration of Yankees," wrote Charles Loring Brace, "could easily overcome many of the moral disadvantages which result from the 'Southern' and Spanish influences."

The ever-loyal George Wharton James believed that "the energy and business acumen of the keen Yankee, the smart Middle Westerner, and the sharp Northerner here unite and commingle, aroused into new and powerful manifestations by the stimulating climatic conditions of this land of the Sun-Down Sea. Though occasionally it gets hot, there is a healthful, vigorous, stirring quality in the atmosphere that provokes to labor." One of James' most popular lectures was entitled: "The Influence of the Climate of Southern California

Upon Its Literature." Neither too hot nor too cold, he thought that "the friction of the winds, generating electricity and adding power to the health-giving ozone, bromine, chlorine, and saline of the sea," killed all noxious germs in the air. Fresh fruits were a perfect diet for the brain-worker, and the presence of great forests in the mountains purified the atmosphere. "The true Californian," he said, "is not averse to exuberant enthusiasm in spite of the fixed, crystallized, cold-blooded standard of the less climatically-favored regions of the earth."

Throughout the years, Southern California has, indeed, come in for more than its share of carping criticism. "Real progress," writes the editor of the *Argus-Leader* of Sioux Falls, "is fostered in areas where the climate changes. Such fluctuations serve to keep the body and the mind active and to prevent stagnation." "Give me," writes still another critic, "the snow, sleet, rain, fog and sunshine in season, the bigness of character, the sincerity, the straightforwardness of a man's word, of the greater part of the people of Newark, New Jersey, in preference any day to the most advertised place in the world—Los Angeles, California." When the tide of national opinion began to turn sharply against Southern California around 1920, it was always the climate that was denounced. "Under the benign sun," wrote *Life*, "the people of Southern California grow lax and almost hysterical." "California," reported the editor of the *Daily News* of Jackson, Mississippi, "is a state of mind—exaltation is in the atmosphere. Birds of gorgeous plumage flit through the trees but they have no song. Flowers astound in size, gorgeous color, and infinite variety, but they have little perfume."

While it has usually been possible to convince the tourists that they will not die of enervation, the more experienced observers have not been so easily won over. "Sooner or later," wrote Helen Hunt Jackson, "there is certain to come a slacking, a toning-down . . . this is as sure as that the sun shines for it is the sun that will bring it about." "The droning of this shoreline," writes Max Miller, "finally knocked ambition out of me . . . twenty constant years of this Southern California shoreline do something to one, all right, and clumsily we can say that they make him crazy or lazy or hazy." "At present we are a hustling crowd," wrote Charles Fletcher Lummis, "but the mañana habit is a matter not of race, nor of speech, but of climate. As sure as God made little apples, this climate will put some

mañana in even the most strenuous life." Nor are these impressions lacking in scientific support. Most of the activities of Southern California, observed the geographer J. Russell Smith in 1925, "are being run by a lot of imported Yankees still running with the energy that results from their having been wound up somewhere else." Granted the existence of mechanical energy in the region, he still had a lingering doubt about the persistence of human energy. In any case, it is this feeling of enervation that most Southern Californians fight like a kind of sleeping sickness. Fear of enervation still haunts the people of the region. Usually it is closely related to still another fear: that the water resources will someday be exhausted and that the land will return to its semi-arid condition.

4. THE AUTHORITY OF THE LAND

*Beautiful and blond they come, the Californians,
Holding their blond beautiful children by the hand;
They come with healthy sunlight in tall hair,
Smiling and empty they stride back over the land.*

*Tanned and tempting, they reverse the pioneer
And glide back to Atlantic shores from their state,
And shows on Broadway have tall, oh, very tall girls,
To replace the shorter kind we generate.*

*California men put airplanes on like shoes
To swoop through the air they beautifully advertise,
And the women of California are splendid women,
With nothing, nothing, nothing behind their eyes.*

*Oranges, movies, smiles, and rainless weather,
Delightful California, you spread to our view,
And the whitest teeth, the brownest, most strokable shoulders,
And a hateful wish to be empty and tall like you.*

—Theodore Spencer

Undeniably, the climate of Southern California, coupled with the severance of old social ties and traditions and customs by migration, works a change in the people who have come to the region. "Surely human beings ought to respond as the fruits do to this climate," wrote Julia M. Sloane, "in spirit as well as in body, and become a very mellow, amiable, sweet-tempered lot of people, and I think they do. Even the 'culls' are almost as good as the rest, though they won't

bear transportation. It is the land of the second chance, of dreams come true, of freshness and opportunity, of the wideness of out-of-doors." "Under the calming influences," wrote Mrs. Daggett, "my pagan intuitions grew hourly. Beneath the lights and shadows of the prophetic mountains, analytical tendencies ceased. Possibly my creeds became unorthodox, but they expanded cheerfully each day."

While one may write off these naive impressions as so much tourist rhetoric, there is no denying the fact of physical change in the California-born generation. In studies made years ago, Dr. David Starr Jordan discovered that "California college girls, of the same age, are larger by almost every dimension than are the college girls of Massachusetts. They are taller, broader-shouldered, thicker-chested (with ten cubic inches more lung capacity), have larger biceps and calves, and a superiority of tested strength." A glance at the roster of tennis, golf, baseball, football, and track stars in America will readily confirm the fact that the Californians are an outdoor people.

That the appeal of California is so physical probably accounts for the cult of the body and the cult of the out-of-doors that have tended to become more pronounced with the years. The Southern Californian's "cult of the body," writes Farnsworth Crowder, "snubs tradition, formality and dignity. Sun-bathing, nudity, bare heads, open-neck shirts are not imposed by cranks; they are dictated by the sun. Health consciousness is extreme and is reflected in the medical profession and in the prevalence of quackery, pseudo-science and cultism. The climate is so entirely congenial to the American athletics mania that sports flourish and 'champions' are a major product. Body-awareness is, of course, heightened among women by the presence of the movies and one sees glamour attempted in the most unexpected corners and on the most improbable faces and figures, until as one draws closer and closer to Hollywood and Vine the effect becomes positively bizarre. . . . All of which might be crudely summed up by saying that there is an inevitable, intrinsic sub-tropical drive, backed by the authority of the land itself, physiologically to 'go native.' This drive, however, is just sufficiently qualified that it does not push people on to complete intellectual and moral laxity. Herein lies California's singularity, her magic, her enormous appeal to outsiders and her hold upon her residents."

The longer people live in this strip of good land, this fortunate coast walled off from the desert by the great arch of mountains, the

more they are influenced by the authority of the land itself. The cult of the body, mentioned by Crowder, is most pronounced. It takes the form of an enormous interest in sports, in sports ware, in the cult of nudism (Southern California has always had more than its share of nudist colonies), in sun-bathing and surf-bathing, and in the open civic planning. Adaptation is a slow process, but nevertheless it is a visible fact. Newcomers to Southern California, sooner or later, discard hats, overcoats, umbrellas, vests; the sport coat and slacks replace the business suit; Venetian blinds take the place of heavy curtains; and, in the process, the people themselves begin to thaw out. "The lands of the sun," reads a Spanish proverb, "expand the soul."

Related to the cult of the body is the general preoccupation with the out-of-doors which amounts to a cult in itself. Sooner or later, the homes are remodeled, if clumsily, to open outward to the sun. The automobile becomes more than standard equipment; it becomes an absolute necessity. With the automobile has come, what J. B. Priestley has described, as "the brand-new busy world" that exists along the roads and highways. It is a new American world with its own inhabitants, its own peculiar bustle and stir, a life which "in its pretty frivolity of colored lights and facetious appeals," is almost wholly divorced, in the desert areas, from the "savage countryside" through which it passes. In this new mode of living, "fast, crude, vivid," a new life is breaking into being "like a crocus through the wintry crust of earth." Southern California is the home of the drive-in: the drive-in market, shopping district, motion picture theater; the center of the self-service idea, in restaurants, stores, and shops; both phenomena of the free life of the automobile. "Everywhere," wrote Michael Williams some years ago, "there are pageants, festivals, out-of-door plays and masques." With this preoccupation with the out-of-doors, the pull of the land, the new orientation outward, there has developed an informality in dress, speech, housing, and manner that makes Southern California, as Otis Ferguson remarked, "loose for comfort but no stitches dropped." In part, this ease of manner is a product of the rich abundance of the land which makes for "lassitude in plenty."

Gradually the land remolds the people, gradually the new pattern emerges. "Perhaps the varying first contacts of pioneers with the soil would be of little moment," wrote T. K. Whipple, "were it not that their experiences are passed on and linger in one way or another

among their descendants and followers. The process of mutual assimilation between people and land which they begin continues so long in their successors that it is nowhere yet complete. But it does begin and go on; the land starts to remake the people as quickly as they start to remake it."

Nowadays physicians are agreed that Southern California really is a rather healthy place in which to live. My friends in the medical profession tell me that certain types of pneumonia are so rare in the region as to be almost unknown and that cases of rheumatic fever—that is, cases originating in the region—are exceedingly rare. Many types of persistent and troublesome allergies, however, are reported, due to the presence of particular pollens throughout most of the year. These same friends inform me that, in their opinion, much illness in the region may be traced to inadequate home construction. Since so much of the home construction has taken place in the months of the long summer, newcomers have not always been aware of the type of construction needed in the rainy season.

"Southern California has changed as no other part of the world has changed. The transition is one, not of degree, but of kind."

—Theodore Van Dyke

CHAPTER VII

YEARS OF THE BOOM

SINCE 1870 the population of Southern California has increased at a phenomenal rate. Not only has the net increase in population been exceptionally large, but the rate of growth has been fantastic. From 1860 to 1870, the population increased 28.4%; from 1870 to 1880, 101%; from 1880 to 1890, 212.8%; from 1890 to 1900, 51.1%; from 1900 to 1910, 147%; from 1910 to 1920, 79.3%; from 1920 to 1930, 117.2%; from 1930 to 1940, 25.2%; and from 1940 to 1943, 10.9%. During the forty-year period 1900 to 1940, the population of the region increased 1107%, while the population of Los Angeles increased 1535.7%, by comparison with an increase of 172% in San Francisco. If the population of the United States had increased at a similar rate, we would today have a national population of 571,564,774.

As will be noted, the rate of growth in Southern California has been strikingly accelerated at fairly regular intervals. Minor spurts have occurred at ten-year intervals, with major upsurges being recorded approximately every eighteen years. According to Lewis A. Maverick, who has studied the real-estate cycles, the years of peak activity have been 1887, 1906, and 1923, and, since his study was made, one could add 1943. Initially the periods of rapid growth were termed "bubbles," but, after 1887, the term "boom" had to be substituted. Neither term accurately describes the nature of the phe-