

EL DORADO

L A N D O F G O L D

A SERIES OF PICTORIAL
INTERPRETATIONS OF THE
HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA
WITH ACCOMPANYING RHYTH-
MIC STORY BY STUDENTS
OF OTIS ART INSTITUTE



THE BOOK OF OTIS

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'Old Don Miguel'

PROLOGUE

Old Don Miguel, weak and feeble,
Sat before the red coal embers,
In the house built by his fathers,
In the days of Arrillago;
Sat there reading faded writing,
In a book with battered covers,
Reading, pondering—mostly pondering,
In the way of men grown aged.

Until, commingled in his fancy,
Cavalier and modern merchant,
Brown robed priest and Argonaut,
Vivid in the pale blue lettering
Of his ancestors, the Miguels.

While outside he heard the rustling
Of the fateful outspread blue prints,
And the strangers voices planning
Streets to cut down thru his orchards;
That he saw them painting signboards,
"Store" and "Bank" and even "Schoolhouse,"
Leaving them absurdly hanging
On the stones or twisted branches
Of the ageless mocking oak trees.

Then his eyes grew dim remembering
Tales they told to him in childhood,
Stories old and oft repeated
Of this richly fabled region,
El Dorado, land of gold.
And he spoke aloud in this wise,
Thus communed he with the embers,
MUTTERING THE WORDS WHICH FOLLOW:



"First of all came Juan Cabrillo"

THE COMING OF CABRILLO

First of all came Juan Cabrillo,
He the one they called intrepid;
Fearless he of foaming waters,
Fearless too of green sea dragons
Rising from the depths of ocean,
For his eyes were ever gleaming,
Ever glowing, dark with wonder
As he thot of what he'd find there,
On the isle of California.

As a boy at court he'd heard them,
Heard those mariners grown aged;
And he'd watched their trembling fingers,
Wrinkled hands forever pointing
Over blue Castilian waters,
Out beyond the gold of sunset,
To the yet more dazzling glitter
Of their gold encrusted island,
To the seven high walled cities
Where were jewels and pesos spilling
Commonly about the streets.

Came Cabrillo in his galleon,
Came he proudly in his galleon,
Came to die upon his island,
And be buried on his island,
Near the bay of San Diego.





JUNIPERO AND HIS INDIAN

Followed after Junipero,
 Never tiring brown robed padre,
 And he sat in consultation
 With a tall conquistador;
 Sat there scrawling names of missions
 On a crudely charted map,
 While the candles less unwavering
 Made their shadows shake and quiver,
 Made them grow to shapes incongruous,
 On the tent's high sloping canvas.

On the morrow rose he early,
 Rose he as the mists were lifting
 Iridescent in the sunlight,
 And he chose him there an oak tree,
 Chose one sturdy for his purpose
 With its branch already twisted,
 There to catch the rope flung upwards,
 There to hold the bell uplifted,
 While he tugged and with his clangor
 Broke the silence of the woodlands,
 Made to echo all the hillsides,
 Till one savage came to question
 Where and why for all this tumult.

Him, he blessed with holy water,
 Gave him beads and gave him blankets,
 Dreaming of great congregations
 Stumbling over brick paved courts,
 Where the pepper trees dripped shadows
 On the white walls of a mission.



THE FOUNDING OF EL PUEBLO

Restless still was one among them,
And was driven by his yearning,
To build up Cabrillo's Cities,
Raise up clusters of adobes,
For the dwellings of his people,
For the future generations.
Thus he wrote the king, his sovereign,
Thus his majesty petitioned,
Till the writ was sent from Lisbon,
Till from Spain were brot the papers,
And the high permission granted.

Straightway then he led his settlers
Near the harbor of San Pedro,
Where the soil was rich and loamy
On Porciuncula low banks;
And he built them there an altar,
Raised the image of our lady,
Bid the Spaniards shoot their muskets,
Bid the Indians point their arrows,
Bid the padres start their chanting,
Called these rocks and trees a city,
Named it then Los Angeles.



"And he built them there an altar"



THE DONS

Came the old and honored families,
 Came the high nobility;
 Came and built their low adobes,
 Where as yet no streets were paved;
 Came and settled in the courtyards,
 Sipping chocolate, and drowsing
 Under drooping pepper trees.

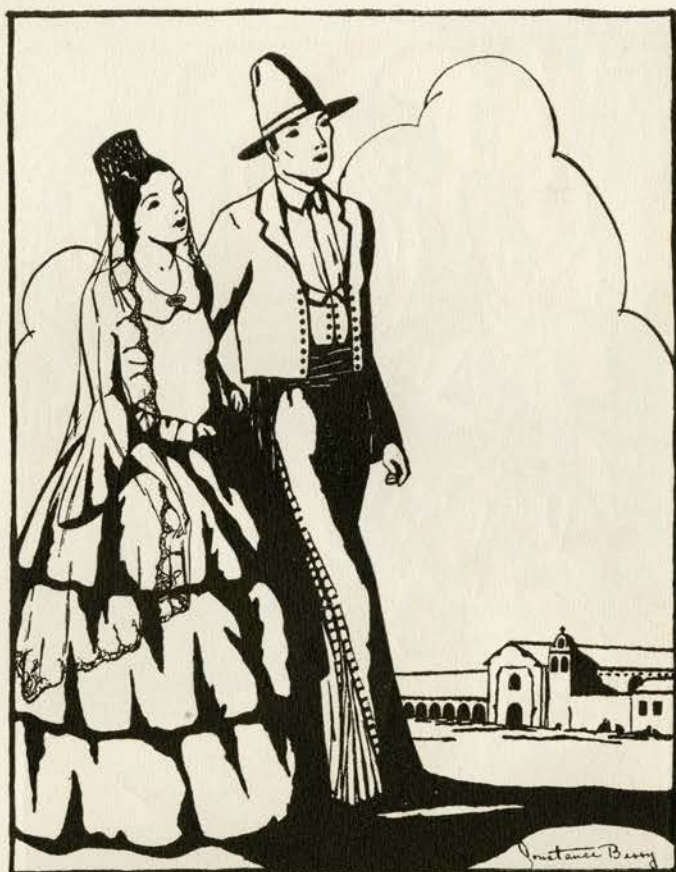
Thus they nodded, and they slumbered,
 While their vineyards grew to ripeness,
 And the grapes by sun were purpled,
 Dripping ready for the winepress.
 Then were ranch house doors flung open;
 Heaped up were the banquet tables,
 And outside was heard the clattering
 Of the many guests arriving;
 Spurs clanked on the steps at landing;
 Silken dresses rustled softly,
 And their laughter rose in cadence,
 As they whirled there the fandango,
 To the tinkling of guitars.



"Under drooping pepper trees"



"Silken dresses rustled softly"



"Of the many guests arriving"



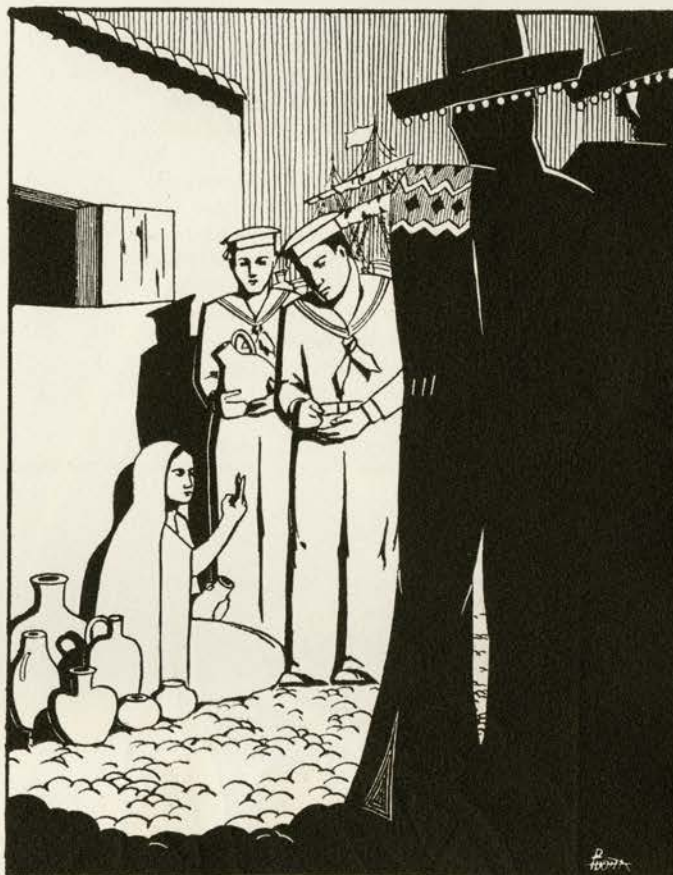
"To the tinkling of guitars"

BEGINNINGS OF A CONFLICT

Dark upon their festive gathering,
Came the news of distant fighting,
Came an ominous declaration
From the ships sailed in the harbor;
From the galleons came dire rumors,
How that Spain a war was waging,
How she fought and how was conquered;
And her flag was sadly lowered,
For the Mexican Iturbe.

Tried he then to rule this region,
Made attempt to law establish,
In this land where dons were jealous,
In this land where gringos flourished;
But the dons rose in rebellion,
And the gringo ships came oftener,
Trading with the ready natives,
Bartering their goods for candles;
While upon the hills, smoked campfires
Of the mountain men with Fremont,
Blue shirt men, who rode the passes
Armed and ready for a skirmish.





"Bartering their goods for candles"

CONQUEST BY THE GRINGOS

Near the bay of San Francisco,
Rose a strange flag boldly flaunting
Star and grizzly for its emblem;
Then was heard the name Kit Carson,
Ide wrote his declaration,
And the camp of Castro trembled
To the nearer pounding hoofbeats
Of the mountain men with Fremont.

While at Monterey was ended,
Once for all the separation,
Of the West coast from the East coast;
Ended by a flag high lifted,
Ended by a proclamation.
So they said themselves high vaunting,
Knowing not with whom they dealt there.
Roused then was the blood of Spaniards,
And their weapons high they flourished,
Understanding not this conquest.
And the blood of many flowed there
Ere they said again more sadly,
Missing comrades killed in battle,
"Now at last by arms is ended,
Once for all the separation,
Of the West coast from the East coast."

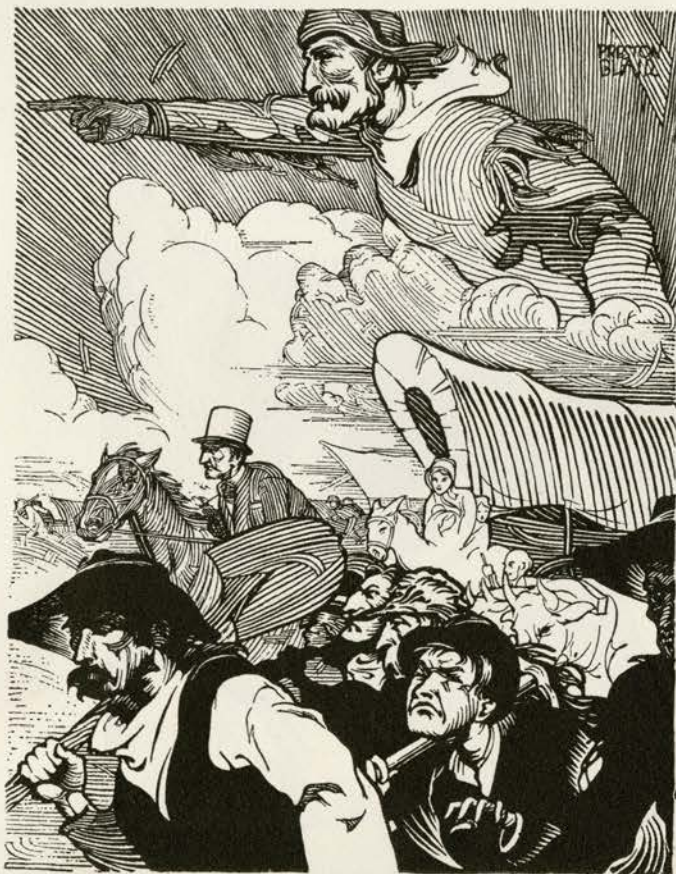




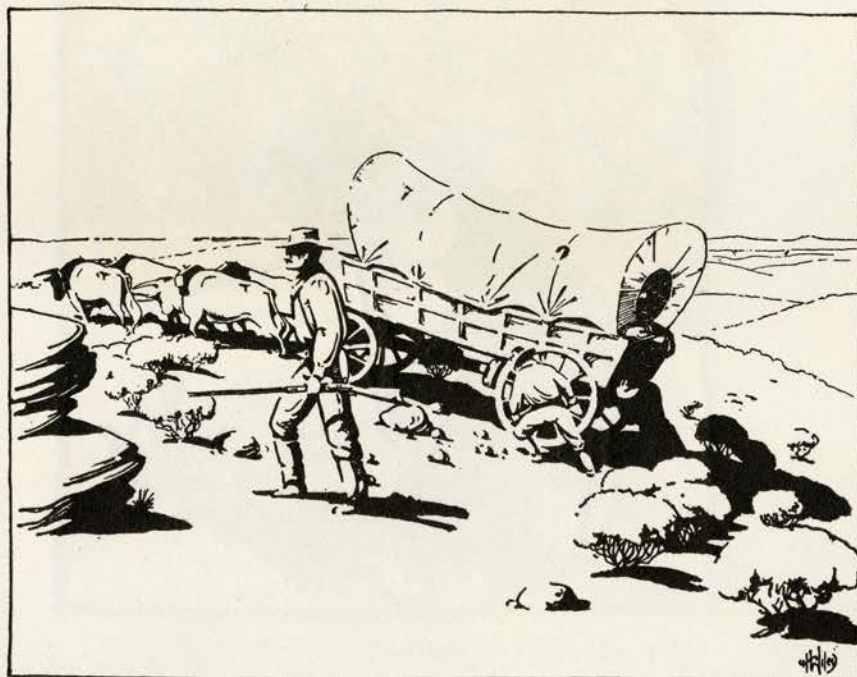
THE COMING OF THE FORTY-NINERS

To his lumber company office,
 Came the one they called James Marshall,
 Came with furtive look and trembling,
 There, behind locked doors, to weigh out
 Gold he'd found beneath the mill dam,
 Nuggets of the precious metal,
 Dug out of a hidden crevice.
 And in six months from the hillsides,
 From the rocks that jutted upwards,
 Sounded out the mighty clanging
 Of a thousand swinging axes,
 Wielded by a mob delirious,
 By a gold-mad crew uplifted.

As the fevered mob pressed onward,
 Building shacks on barren hillsides,
 Calling them such names as Hangtown;
 San Francisco's empty harbor
 Sudden swarmed with ships at anchor;
 Sidewalks grew of stoves and flour sacks.
 In one night arose a city!



"As the fevered mob pressed onward"



Forty-niners



"THE CITY"

Yes, a city rose in one night;
On the next one came the Vandals,
Came "The Hounds" therein to ravage,
There to steal the gold of miners,
There to rob and kill and pillage;
Till the strong men roused to fury,
Law created there and order,
Justice striking quick the offender,
Driving forth the thieves and criminals,
Making it again a city
Worthy of its purposed founding.





"There to rob and kill and pillage"



THE DRIVING OF THE GOLD SPIKE

Now the cities rising swiftly,
 In this wild uncharted westland,
 Tired grew of donkey carting,
 Tired of the slow procession
 Of their goods across the mountains;
 And another man named Judah
 Told them he could build a roadway,
 Told them it would be of steel rails,
 Over which wheels fast revolving,
 Driven by a chugging engine,
 Faster, faster, and still faster,
 Eastward then their goods would carry.

Then, indeed, they laughed and jeered him
 Saying, "Fool" and "Crazy notion."
 Yet he kept on till a few men,
 Kindled by his greater vision,
 Built the road up over mountains,
 Built it there in spite of snow cakes
 Freezing fast their work destroying,
 Built it there in spite of waters
 Flooding thru the lower places
 Fast destroying all their labor,
 Built the road across the desert,
 Built it there in spite of parching
 Thirst, and heat that seemed intolerable.

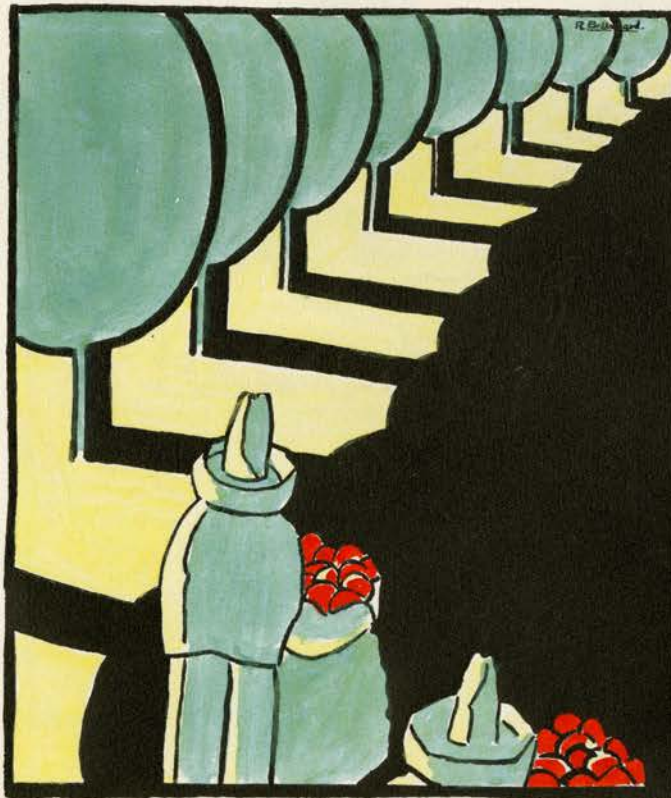
And at last the gold spike driven,
 Welding East and West once more,
 Cheers arose and men cried, "Bravo!"

BIGGER AND BETTER FRUIT

Came a time when one year's wheat crop
Equaled all the gold the miners
Frenzied dug from out the mountains,
Then the soil grew rich in value;
Rivers flowed out of their courses,
Watering all the arid region,
Making it all green and fertile.
Then the fruit trees rose and flourished;
Then the flowers blazed with color,
Painted by the tropic sun,
Basking in its shimmering rays.

Till the name of California,
Came to stand for fruits grown larger,
Grown more luscious in their juices:
And for flowers rising taller,
Spreading out more giant petals,
Colored with a richer hue,
Than the world had yet discovered.

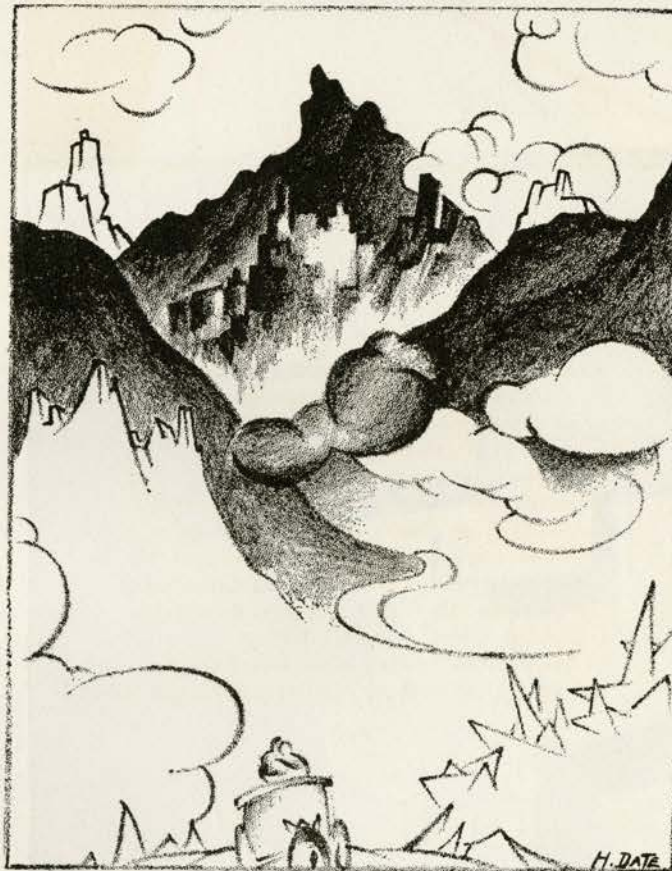
And once more the seven cities,
Now more nearly seventy,
Glittered with the "Jewels and pesos
Spilling commonly about the streets."



A UTOPIA FOR CONVALESCENTS

Westward thronged the wondering travelers,
Westward thronged the sick and jaded;
Came to view the sights stupendous,
Came to feel the healing rays,
Came to feast their eyes and stomachs
On the far-famed flowers and fruits.
Market places lined the roadways,
Spread there all their vivid color,
All their tempting lusciousness,
Snaring thus the passing traveler,
Causing him to pause and pause again.
Rich men came and spent their riches;
Weak men came and there grew strong.

No more biting cold of Winter,
No more snow and wind and sleet.
"Utopia," the signboards called it,
"Convalescents welcome home!"





OIL

Rose within this land a forest,
Built there by fast pounding hammers,
Stiff and stilted wooden frameworks,
Growing denser day by day,
Reaching even to the ocean,
Greedy for new wealth discovered,
Grasping at more chance for gain.

Now once more the fabled cities,
Gave out of their deep hid treasure,
Gave this time not golden nuggets,
But the oils for lubricating
Wheels now faster still revolving,
Round and round and round and round.

BOOM—BOOM—BOOM!

Highways now preceded houses,
Bridges, too, and viaducts,
High encircling barren mountains,
Spanning chasms filled with rocks.
Before buildings, came the signboards
Telling names of towns and streets,
Boasting, too, the untold virtues
Of these homesites excellent.
Old estates were cut with sidewalks,
Street car lines, and so-called centers
For their new communities.
Soon they'd have in California,
Houses for the entire world!



AND THEN—

As the Easterners moved westward,
And these houses filled with dwellers,
Would then, civilization's center
Be this once raw savage section?
Would they raise up jutting buildings,
Clustered close as on Manhattan,
Towers cutting up the blue?
Would the traffic delve in tunnels,
Rise in clattering elevateds?
Would gigantic airplanes, darting
In between the walls of buildings,
Rise again, with white wings flashing
In the blue infinity?





*"Again outside he heard the rustling
of the fateful outspread blueprints"*

EPILOGUE

Again outside he heard the rustling
Of the fateful outspread blue prints,
And the strangers' voices planning
How the "old man" would not last long,
How they'd build out of his orchards
Houses, houses, and more houses,
For the westward thronging peoples,
Come to spend out here their fortunes,
Come to view the far-famed wonders
Of this California.
On the morrow, he would question
Of their schemings and their plannings,
And the things that they had plotted
For this land of fabled riches,
For this legendary region,
EL DORADO, LAND OF GOLD.

