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There was considerable competition in later years among the traders on the coast, and there were not wanting instances of sharp practice in the collection of hides and tallow, especially during the slaughtering season. Merchants trusted the rancheros largely for the goods they sold them, and the indebtedness was paid when the hides and tallow were prepared. Most of the rancheros were in debt at the time. One of them, for instance, would promise the trader to supply him at a specified time with hides and tallow, but shortly before the time so fixed another trader, to whom he was also indebted, would come, and by persistent efforts and blandishments, so work upon him as to secure for himself a good portion of the *esquilmos* which had been promised to the first trader. When the latter in due time presented himself, and demanded the fulfilment of the ranchero's promise, such demand the poor man could not disregard. Then the second trader's claim had also to be attended to in some way, at least in a measure, and so, between debt and duty, the ranchero was pretty well pulled to pieces. The hides were often received in a green state, and had to be staked out and dried at Yerba Buena or San Diego. Davis often had them staked out in a meadow by the waterside in Yerba Buena, between what are now Washington and California streets. It was considered legitimate among traders for the best to outstrip the others in the race for precedence. Business was transacted in a straightforward manner between the merchants and the Californians. The purchaser never had occasion to ask the price, the seller quietly naming it at once, which was accepted or declined without more ado. No advantage was taken. There were, of course, exceptions, but this was the rule.

The merchant, Don José Antonio Aguirre, owner of the ship, *Joven Guipuzcoana*, once had a new supercargo, a young man, who was a stranger to and ignorant of affairs in California. While the ship lay at San Pedro, Aguirre being absent on the shore, Agus-

tin Machado, a well-to-do ranchero, and a man of sterling character, but who could neither read nor write, went on board to make purchases, his carts being at the landing. After his goods had been selected, as he was about having them placed in a launch to be carried on shore, the supercargo asked him for payment, or some guaranty or note of hand. Machado stared at him in great astonishment; at first he could not comprehend what the man meant. Such a demand had never been made from him before, nor, in fact, from any other ranchero. After a while, the idea struck him that he was distrusted. Plucking one hair from his beard, he seriously handed it to the supercargo, saying, "Here, deliver this to Señor Aguirre, and tell him it is a hair from the beard of Agustin Machado. It will cover your responsibility; it is sufficient guaranty." The young man felt much abashed, took the hair and placed it inside of his book. Machado carried away the goods. Aguirre was chagrined on hearing that the supercargo had demanded a document from Machado, a man whose word was as good as the best bond, even for the entire ship's cargo.

José M. Estudillo, who was a brother-in-law of Aguirre, and in his employ from boyhood, relates the above, and also the following occurrences in which the same Agustin Machado was concerned. In 1850 Aguirre despatched him, Estudillo, to Los Angeles to collect old bills, many of which were outlawed; but the greater part of them were finally paid. He visited Machado's rancho, La Bayona, to collect a balance of about \$4,000, and happened to arrive when the house was full of company. He was cordially received as a guest, and a little later on being apprised of the object of his visit, Machado said that he had been for some time past thinking that he was indebted to Aguirre. As Estudillo could not remain long, Machado made him take a fresh horse, and promised to see him in Los Angeles in two days. On the time appointed Machado was there, and delivered him

the whole sum at the door of Manuel Requena's house, and refused to take a receipt, saying that Aguirre was not in the habit of collecting the same bill twice.

Before 1826 nine or ten trading craft, and later twice as many, came to the coast each year laden with goods to be exchanged for hides and tallow. Restrictions imposed by the laws were regularly disregarded by the authorities of California under Mexican rule. Gradually, as the excess of duties developed smuggling, wayports and *embarcaderos* were closed, and even Santa Bárbara and San Francisco. In the last years other restrictive measures were attempted, but they generally came to naught; subordinate officials were mostly influenced by the traders, and even the governor often had to submit to the inevitable when a supercargo or owner threatened to take his valuable cargo.

The people seldom resorted to the stores to sell their produce, preferring to await the arrival of vessels which paid more. There was no rivalry between the mission padres and private persons, although they had the same object in view. The padres often gave good advice to the latter in trade.

Laplace went aboard one of the ships which was moored near the land for trading. The goods were spread out on deck. The greater part of those offered were of little value, except the articles relating to the feminine toilette, which were more costly and in great demand. There were household and agricultural implements, side-arms and fire-arms, powder and lead, marine stores, hardware, woolen and cotton stuffs, and a hundred other things easy to sell in a new country.

Phelps, who was in the California and Boston trade in 1840, says that all ships intending to trade on the coast came there to make the best bargain they could with the authorities respecting duties, gave security for payment, and received permission to trade at all

the ports until the voyage was completed. The duties on an invoice of cargo averaged about 100 per cent, payable half in cash, and half in esquimos, hides and tallow, or goods from the ship. As I have before stated, there was but a limited quantity of specie in the country. Trading vessels brought only moderate sums, barely enough to meet the duties. Many of them borrowed what money they needed for that purpose. Most of the trade was an exchange of goods for domestic produce. Bryant, Sturgis, & Co., the Boston firm, not only furnished most of the goods used in California, but also most of the coin for the payment of the salaries of the revenue and military officers, which payments were contingent on the arrival of the next ship—the duties on a cargo being always anticipated by custom-house orders on such ship for their pay, in goods and cash in equal proportion.

To give some idea of the labors of the trading voyages made by the Boston traders on the California coast, Phelps states that on his 1840-43 voyage, his ship was seven times at San Francisco, thirteen times at Monterey, three times at Santa Cruz, four times at San Luis Rey, seventeen times at Santa Bárbara, seventeen times at San Pedro, five times at Refugio, and returned to the depot ten times, frequently anchoring at other places along shore. The bow anchor was hove up 131 times, and the crew killed and consumed while on the coast 203 bullocks. In collecting and curing a hide cargo, and finally stowing it on board ship, each hide had to be handled twenty-two times.

The want of enterprise was apparent on the part of the people by their paying high prices, with much grumbling, for salt and dealboards, which could easily have been procured at San Francisco and elsewhere. Sea-otter skins were purchased at \$20 a piece, while the animals swam about in the bay.

The Californians could have done well in furs had