

PREFACE

A comparison of the Vital Records for 1856 with those of today reveals that the standardized form of today did not belong to the early period. Today punctuation, the use of capitals, the meticulous recording of the date and the place of residence follow a definite form. Only in our death records is there a lingering note still of that interest in the individual that the old records so abundantly convey. Such informality in the records inevitably suggest that the style is "quaint". Quaint indeed seems a birth reading, "to the lady of John Brown of a Son," son "or the birth "of female twins". ----

In a larger sense, they record the beginnings of the new American city on the then remote western coast, and as such, they furnish us with invaluable historical source material. We follow the life of the port in records that show close contact with Hawaii and the outer Pacific even in that early day. The famous whaling industry, still in the hey-day of its prosperity, lives again for us in such a record as that of Captain Almy, "for many years Master in the whaling service." Or in that of the New Bedford sailor of the whale-ship "Nauticon", etc. In contrast and equally important are records showing the young pioneer city as the focal point of interest for the interior from Utah to the Coast and from Washington Territory to Baja California.

The records show that the health of the city suffered appalling ravages from pulmonary troubles, and its high infant mortality is revealed in such records as those of the death of the three young children of a Sonoma pastor within five days, and there is many a similar one. On the other hand, the vigorous growth of the city is shown when its residential areas advance from such water-front locations as No. 5 Jackson St. to Third and Mission and on to McAllister and Jones Sts.