

THE RAG PALACE CITY

1846 - 1854

THE WONDROUS MAKE-DO HOUSES

*Oh, What was your name in the States?
Was it Johnson, Thompson or Bates?
Did you murder your wife
Or fly for your life?
Oh, what was your name in the States?*

—Popular Gold Rush Ditty

“THE PEOPLE OF SAN FRANCISCO are stark raving mad!” wrote a correspondent for the *New York Evening Post* in 1849. “Looking wondrously dirty and out of elbow, these self-styled millionaires have dragged me through mud and filth, almost up to my middle, from one pine box to another which they are pleased to call mansion, bank, hotel or store, and I am told that these splendid structures bring an agglomerated rental of not less than twelve million dollars a year . . . and this with a population not exceeding twelve thousand inhabitants. New York, with its population of five hundred thousand, does not give a rental greater than this!”