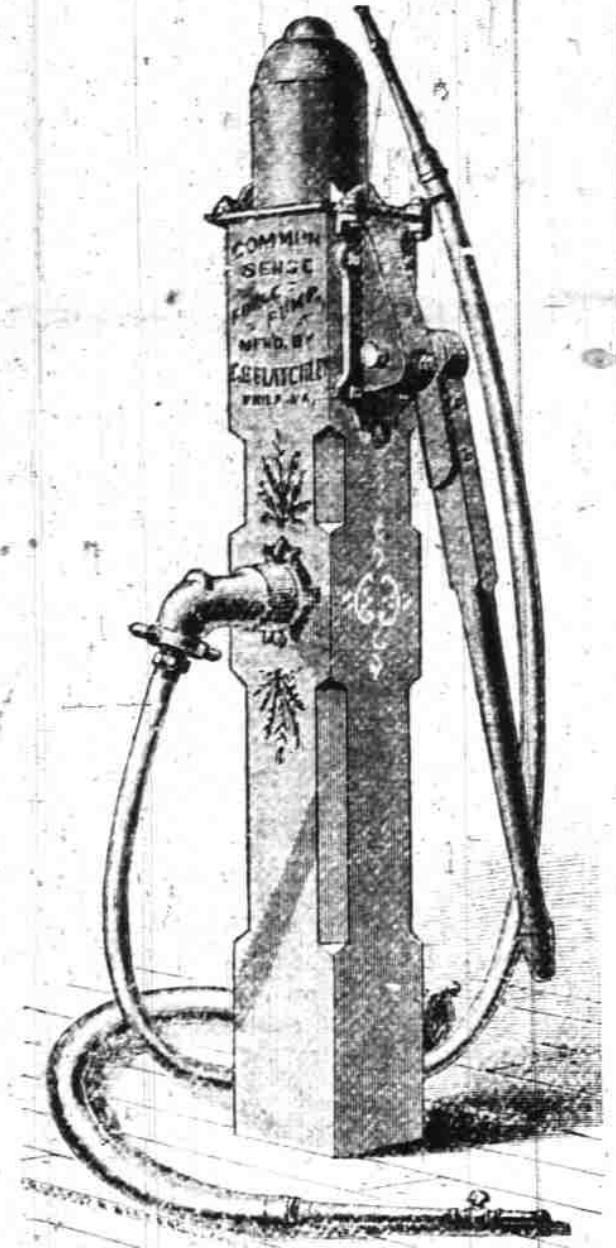


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THE GOLD FEVER.

A TALK WITH A CALIFORNIA ARGONAUT.

The First Piece of Gold Found Now Kept at the National Museum—Early Scenes in the Gold Fields. The original cause of the great California gold fever—the first fever germ—is at the National Museum. It is securely sealed in a little glass bottle, and there is no longer any danger of contagion. It is a little flattened piece of gold about the size of a gold dollar. It is the piece found by Marshall, while digging a mill-race the year before the fever set in. It was sent direct to the Smithsonian in August, 1848. The following is a copy of the letter that accompanies it: SAN FRANCISCO, August 23, 1848. This paper contains the first piece of gold ever discovered in the northern part of Upper California. It was found in February, 1848, by James W. Marshall, in the race of Captain A. Sutter's sawmill, about forty-five miles from Sutter's Fork, on the south branch of the American Fork. It was beaten out with a hammer by Mr. Marshall to test its malleability. It is presented to the National Institute, Washington, D. C. L. FOLSON.

J. L. Folsom was a captain in the United States service. There are many pieces of gold in California claimed to be the first found, but none of them have the facts in favor of their claim. The discovery of this piece of gold by Marshall led to the search of more, and it was found. It was the seed that up to 1880 had produced \$1,200,000,000 in gold. Prior to this discovery, Indians and a few missionary priests had been collecting some gold in other parts of the State, but this was the very first piece found in the gold belt, and it led to the great rush to California in '49.

Dr. R. M. Dawes, the dentist of West Washington, was one of the forty-niners who started out from Washington. He was talking over the matter with a Star reporter for a little while last evening. "A party of us," he said, "took a sailing vessel at Baltimore in March, and we were seven months and fourteen days making the trip to San Francisco. There were my brother and ex-Senator Sargent, then a local reporter in Washington, one or two other Washington boys and myself, and there were quite a number of others from Baltimore to make up the party. That was the way Sargent first went to the State he afterward represented in the Senate. We had a pretty hard voyage. The Captain of the vessel treated us so badly that when we got to Rio de Janeiro we complained to the Consul and had him removed. This caused a delay of fourteen days. Then at Valparaiso we had to unload a steam engine and other cargo, which caused a delay of twenty days more. It was a very weary voyage before we got to San Francisco. Sargent did not go all the way with us. He got off at Valparaiso, and from there sailed to San Francisco in another vessel. I remember that he studied Spanish all the way from Baltimore to Rio de Janeiro.

"When we arrived at San Francisco several of our party who were carpenters stopped there. They got \$16 a day for working at their trade there, and thought it better than taking the chances in the mines. There were six in my party who went into prospecting. Every thing was fever and excitement there then. All sorts of sensational reports of big finds were circulated, but there was not as much outlawry as many people suppose. In San Francisco there was considerable gambling. It was not much of a city then. All the buildings were frame, and the gambling-houses were like the frame barracks they put up for soldiers. The gaming-rooms were in front and the bar in the rear. Gamblers would pay \$50 a night for each table. They never counted the money, but just stacked it up on the table, and measured it in that way. The gamblers were the only men who wore white shirts.

"There were no courts. If a man committed an offense in the diggings he was tried by twelve men selected for the occasion, and their decisions were prompt and just. For that reason there were few crimes committed. Our gold was left in camp without any one to guard it and it was never stolen. I would sometimes leave a day's diggings in a pan out in the sun to dry. No one ever disturbed it. For serious crimes the jury of twelve would hang a man; for petty larceny they would horse-whip him and give him twenty-four hours to get out of camp. If a man sunk a pit and threw a pick or shovel in it he could go on prospecting, and if he returned any time within ten days he would find his claim to the diggings respected.

diggings, well stocked with provisions. We went first to South Fork, then to North Fork or Feather River. There was so much mud that we had to abandon our cattle and wagon and carry our packs on our backs. We did pretty well, but I was sick and had to keep out of the trenches and give up mining for a while. When we dissolved partnership at North Fork a sack of flour fell to my share and I sold it for \$200. I then bought a boat and gun and shot quail and jack rabbits and sold them in San Francisco. Quail brought \$7 and \$8 per dozen dead, and \$19 alive; and jack rabbits \$7 and \$8 each. The second time I went back to San Francisco the cholera was raging there. Men were dropping dead like sheep. "I went to the diggings again, and we came across a big rock near Middle Fork standing high out of the water, which whirled in a swift eddy around it. We knew if there was any gold in that locality it would be right in this eddy. So we filled bags with sand and made a dam to turn the water aside so that we could get at it. The very first dip of my pan brought up \$218 worth of gold. After working there a week we divided up, and each got \$900 as his share. There were six of us."—Washington Star.

The Gerry-mander. The history of the word gerry-mander is interesting. In 1811 the anti-Federalists, or Republicans, as they were then called, after a bitter contest, succeeded in electing their candidate for Governor of Massachusetts, Elbridge Gerry, and a majority in both houses of the Legislature. In order to maintain this majority in the future, they proceeded to re-arrange the Senatorial districts of the State, which had hitherto been formed without any division of counties, by dividing counties so as to secure an anti-Federalist majority, even though the counties were, in reality, strongly Federal in sentiment. The Federalists protested, but in vain; the divisions were made without even a consideration of the propriety of the act; the work was sanctioned by the Governor, and became a law by his signature; wherefore his political opponents soundly castigated him through the newspapers and at public meetings. In Essex County the arrangement of the districts in relation to the towns was singular and absurd. Russell, the veteran editor of the Boston Sentinel, who had strenuously opposed the scheme, took a map of that county and coloring the selected towns, hung it on the wall of his editorial room. One day Gilbert Stuart, the eminent painter, was in the room, and looking at the map remarked that the colored townships resembled some monstrous animal. He took a pencil, and with a few touches drew a head, wings, claws and tail. "There," said Stuart, "that will do for a salamander." Reynolds looking at the hideous figure exclaimed: "Salamander! Call it gerry-mander." An engraved copy of this map was widely circulated by Russell, and the word was immediately adopted into the national political vocabulary as a term of reproach for those who change boundaries of districts for a partisan purpose.—Littell's Living Age.

Underdressed Children. Nearly 50,000 children under five years of age die annually in the United States of pulmonary affections, and there is no doubt that a large proportion of these deaths are due to needless exposure to cold and wet, and to the ignorance or neglect which so generally prevails with respect to the matter of clothing. The absurd delusion which suggests that to harden children it is essential to expose their legs and chests to the piercing blasts of winter, their bare feet to the wet, cold earth, their uncovered heads to the summer sun, leads to many an illness which terminates fatally. We might reasonably expect that examples of that belief would be furnished from among the ignorant poor; but not so, we can see on our streets any day in the winter months the children of our most intelligent classes clad in expensive dresses, with neck, arms and legs perfectly bare. The average mother exercises little more discretion in dressing her children than an American savage.—The South.

Congressional Wit. The pages of the Congressional Record are thickly strewn with "suppluses," "laughters," "great laughter and applause," etc.; but the reader of the context often has difficulty in discovering the real occasion for the enthusiasm or hilarity of the members. The speeches are as a rule, commonplace, the wit stale or pointless, the jokes distastefully stupid. Congressional wit does not differ from that of the mart, the street, or the saloon; its life departs when removed from its surroundings, and very little of it will bear printing.—The American Magazine.

A Watery Cow. In a milk-adulteration case at Cheltenham, England, the other day, a sample of "babies' milk" sold by the defendant was proved to contain ten per cent of added water. At the request of the defendant, however, the cow, responsible for the sample was milked in the presence of the inspector, and the bulk, in legal phraseology, proved to correspond exactly with the sample. The inspector said (presumably): "How shall we deal with a watery cow? The law makes no provision for punishing a crow guilty of watering her own milk."

POPULAR SCIENCE.

Italian astronomers say the world is eight million years old, and has been peopled about fifty millions.
The "canals" on the surface of Mars extend from sea to sea across the planet's continent, and are about fifteen miles wide.

The reptiles of Brazil are now reported by Prof. E. D. Cope to number sixty-two species (twelve being newly discovered), of which eighteen are batrachians, fifteen lizards and twenty-nine snakes.

The height of a proposed exhibition tower in Paris is so great as to render a hydraulic lift impossible, and a huge screw has been substituted, insuring safety and celerity.

The red stars above the ninth magnitude have been catalogued by Mr G. F. Chambers after sixteen years of labor. The list gives 711 stars as distinctly reddish or orange, of which not more than a dozen are really ruby or carmine.

Among the many masses of meteoric iron which have been described, only nine, according to Prof. W. E. Hidden, have been seen to fall, the places and dates being: Agram, Croatia, May 26, 1751; Charlotte, Tenn., Aug. 1, 1835; Braunsau, Bohemia, July 14, 1847; Tabarz, Saxony, Oct. 18, 1854; Victoria West, Africa, in 1862; Nejed, Arabia, Spring of 1865; Nedagolia, India, Jan. 23, 1870; Rowton, Shropshire, England, April 20, 1876; Mazapil, Mexico, Nov. 27, 1885.

The increasing difficulty of adding to the world's stock of knowledge of the Arctic regions is turning the intention of explorers to the more distant, but fresher fields for research lying about the South Pole. An Antarctic expedition is now being fitted out by Baron Nordenskjold, and is expected to leave Sweden in the Autumn for an absence of eighteen months; while it is probable that during the next few years several other expeditions will be attracted to the unknown ice seas of the Southern Hemisphere.

The demand for cheap aluminium has stimulated researches in every possible direction. Mr. James MacClear in a paper before the Society of Chemical Industry describes a new method for manufacturing sodium and potassium cheaply. As now made according to the Deville method aluminium depends upon sodium. With caustic soda at \$55 a ton the metallic sodium costs about 25 cents a pound, allowing 17 cents for fuel and materials. With sodium at this price aluminium can probably be put on the market at \$4 a pound, or about one-fourth of its present value.

It is a fact worth noting that no comet, so far as is known, has ever come in contact with the earth, or mingled its substance with the earth's atmosphere. The nearest approach ever observed was Lexell's comet of 1770, which approached to within 1,400,000 miles of the earth, and subtended an angle of 2 degrees 23 minutes, the largest apparent diameter, yet observed in any comet. It has not been seen since 1770, though an orbit was completed for it of only five and a half years, and astronomers are of the opinion that perturbation by Jupiter may have changed its orbit to one of long period.

Money Value of a Wife. Let a man become a widower and he soon learns what the financial worth of a wife was to him. When he is compelled to hire the food cooked, the garments made or mended, the washing and ironing done, he finds that about one-half of his income is required to meet these outgoes. Who saved this expense before? Let the cold fingers and the silent lips in the graveyard bear testimony. The family purse should be as accessible to a faithful wife as to the husband. What man would consent to become a partner in a company in which his brother partner should alone have control of the company's funds? There is no one thing more degrading and depressing to a hard working wife, than to feel that she must beg like a tramp for every cent she spends beyond her food, which as truly belongs to her as though she earned it as a domestic or shop girl.—New England Farmer.

A Novel Park. A rich New Zealand Prince, full of new zeal and so forth on the subject of public parks, has presented to his government a large district of wild country which he owns, for park purposes. One of the most interesting features of the park that is to be, is a genuine volcano that is alive and kicking, besides an extinct volcano that might be made to erupt on the Fourth of July and other holidays, by artificial means, and a lake of boiling hot water. Picnic parties will find the latter very convenient for the production of hard-boiled eggs steaming hot. No matter how stringent a prohibition law New Zealand may adopt, with two volcanoes in the park visitors will be able to find plenty of the "crater."—Texas Siftings.

Dead Capital in Farm Fences. It is said that the amount of "dead" capital invested in farm fences in the United States alone reaches the immense aggregate of \$5,000,000,000, and that the construction of new fences and the renewal of old ones involves an outlay of no less than \$200,000,000 annually. It is difficult to fix an approximate idea of what immense sums as these represent, but some conception of this enormous investment may be formed upon the fact that it nearly equals the capital stock of all the railroads in the country, while the annual expense almost parallels the entire revenue of the National Government.—Chicago Times.

In a recent lecture at Dallas, Texas, Hon. J. R. G. Pitkin, of New Orleans, paid a compliment to the press by saying a newspaper, the impersonal mouthpiece of public wisdom, sifted to the bottom current events, and laid bare the truth, sometimes pleasant, but more frequently galling.