

ABOUT THE GOLD FEVER.

HOW IT AFFECTED PRENTICE MULFORD'S NATIVE VILLAGE.

The Formation of Companies—The Last Sunday at Home and the Girl He Left Behind Him—Return of an Argonaut. Revolution, Revolution, Dust and Decay.



ONE June morning, when I was a boy, Captain Eben Latham came to our house, and the first gossip he unloaded was that "them stories about finding gold in California was all true."

It was "wash day" and our folks and some of the neighbors were gathered in the "wash house" while the colored help sponged her fat black arms in the suds of the wash tub.

That was the first report I heard from California. Old Eben had been a man of the sea; was once captured by a pirate, and when he told the story, which he did once a week, he demolished by rolling up his trousers and showing the bullet scars he had received.

California then was but a blotch of yellow on the schoolboy's map of 1847. It was associated only with hides, tallow and Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast." It was thought of principally in connection with long horned savage cattle, tasses and Mexicans. Very rare bits of entire vacancy and mystery was the entire region west of the Rocky mountains. What was known as the Indian Territory covered an area now occupied by half a dozen prosperous states.

Texas was then the Mecca of adventurers and people who found it advisable to leave home suddenly. The phrase in those days, "Gone to Texas," had a meaning almost equivalent to "Gone to the —." Then California took its place.

The report slumbered during the summer in our village, but in the fall it commenced kindling and by winter it was ablaze. Then companies commenced forming. It was not entirely a strange land to some of our people.

Girls was a whaling village. Two-thirds of the male population were bred to the sea. Every boy knew the ropes of a ship as soon if not sooner than he did his multiplication table. Ours was a "traveled" community. They went nearer the north and south poles than most people of their time, and Behring straits, the Kamtschatka coast, the sea of Japan, Rio Janeiro, Valparaiso, the Sandwich islands, the Azores and the names of many other remote localities were words in every one's mouth, and words, too, which were familiar with from childhood. Many of our whalers had touched at San Francisco and Monterey. There had recently been a great break down in the whale fishery. Whale ships for sale were plentiful. Most of them were bought to carry the "49" rush of merchandise and men to California.

By November, 1848, California was the talk of the village, as it was all that time of the whole country. The great gold fever raged all winter.

All the old retired whaling captains wanted to go, and most of them did go. All the spruce young men of the place wanted to go. Companies were formed, and there was much serious drawing up of constitutions and bylaws for the avowed object of the companies, as set forth in these documents, was "Mining and trading with the Indians." Great profit was expected to be gotten out of the California Indian. He was expected to give stores of gold and furs in exchange for gilt watches, brass chains, beads and glass marbles. The companies bought slaves in which to keep their gold, and also strange and complex gold washing machines, of which numerous patterns suddenly sprang up, invented by Yankees who never saw and never were to see a gold mine. Curious ideas were entertained relative to California. The Sacramento river was reported as abounding in alligators. Colored prints represented the adventurer pursued by these reptiles. The general opinion was that it was a fearfully hot country and full of snakes.

Of the companies formed in our vicinity some had more standing and weight than others, and membership in them was eagerly sought for. An idea prevailed that when this moral weight and respectability was launched on the shores of California it would entail fortune on all belonging to the organization. People with the lightning glance and divination of golden anticipation saw themselves already in the mines hauling over chunks of ore and returning home weighed down with them. Five years was the longest period any one expected to stay. Five years at most was to be given to rifling California of her treasures, and then that country was to be thrown aside like a used-up newspaper, and the rich adventurers would spend the remainder of their days in wealth, peace and prosperity at their eastern homes. No one talked then of going out "to build up the glorious state of California." No one then ever took any pride in the thought that he might be called a "Californian." So they went.

People who could not go invested in men who could go, and paid half the expense of their passage and outfit on condition that they should remit back half the gold they dug. This description of Argonaut seldom paid any dividends. I doubt if one ever sent back a dollar.

Eastern shareholders really got their money's worth in gilded hopes, which with them lasted for years. But people never put such brilliant anticipations on the credit side of the account, and merely because that at the last they are not realized.

As the winter of '48" waned the companies, one after another, set sail for the land of gold. The Sunday preceding they listened to farewell sermons at church. I recollect seeing a score or two of the young Argonauts thus proscribed. They were admonished from the pulpit to behave temperately, virtuously, wisely and piously. How seriously they listened. How soberly were their narrow brimmed, straight-up-and-down little plug hats of that period piled one atop the other in front of them. How glistened their hair with the village barber's hair oil. How pronounced the creak of their tight boots as they marched up the aisle. How brilliant the hue of their neckties. How patiently and resignedly they listened to the sad discourse of the minister, knowing it would be the last they would hear for many months. How eager the glances they cast up to the church choir, where sat the girls they were to marry on their return. How few returned. How few married the girl of that period's choice. How little weighed the words of the minister a year afterward in the hurry scurry of the San Francisco life of '49-50.

What an innocent, unsophisticated, inexperienced lot were those forty odd young Argonauts who sat in those pews! Not one of them then could bake his own bread, turn a flapjack, re-seat his trousers or wash his shirt. Not one of them had dug even a posthole. All had a vague sort of impression that California was a nutshell of a country and that they would see each other there frequently, and eventually all return home at or about the same time. How little they realized that one was to go to the northern and one to the southern mines and one to remain in San Francisco, and the three never to meet again! What glittering gold mines existed in their brains even during the preaching of that sermon! How where the gold was put out by the shovel, from which an occasional boulder or pebble was picked out and flung away.

The young Argonaut, church being dismissed, took his little stiff, shiny plug and went home to the last Sunday tea. And that Sunday night, on seeing her home from church for the last time, he was allowed to sit up with her almost as long as he pleased. The light glimmered long from the old homestead front parlor window. The cold north wind without roared among the leafless sycamores and crashed the branches together. It was a sad, sad pleasure. The old sofa they sat upon would be sat upon by them no more for years. For years? Forever in many cases. Today, old and gray, gaunt and bent, somewhere in the gulches, "up north" somewhere, hidden away in an obscure mining camp of the Tuolumne, Stanislaus or Mokelumne, up in Cariboo or down in Arizona, still he recollects that night as a dream. And she! Oh, she dried her eyes and married the stay-at-home five years after. A girl can't wait forever. And besides, bad reports after a time reached home about him. He drank. He gambled. He found fair friends among the senoritas. And, worse than all, he made no fortune.

By spring most of the Argonauts had departed. With them went the flower of the village. Their absence made a big social gap and that for many a day. The girls they left behind tried for a time to live on hope, and afterward "took up" and made the most of the younger generation of boys.

After many months came the first letters from San Francisco, and then specimens of gold dust and gold pieces. The gold dust came in quills or in vials, mixed with black sand.

In the course of two years a few of the "boys" came straggling back. The first of these arrivals, I remember, walked up our main street, wearing on his shoulders a brilliant lined Mexican serape. It created a sensation. All the small boys of the village "tagged on behind him," a sort of impromptu guard of honor. The serape was about all he had brought home. He talked a great deal of gold and brought specimens, but not in sufficient quantity to pay all outstanding bills. The next of the returned was a leger, gaunt, yellow case of Charges fever. He brought only gloom. Along in 1853-4 came a few of the more fortunate who had made a "raise." Two returned and paid up their creditors in full who had been by creditors given over. But few came to remain. They "staid around" home a few weeks, turned up their noses at the small prices asked for drinks, cigars and stews, treated everybody, grew restless and were off again.

Sometimes on visiting my native village I stand before one of those old fashioned houses, from whose front door thirty-four years ago there went forth for the last time the young Argonaut on his way to the ship. There is more than one such house in the village. The door is double, the knocker is still upon it, the window panes are small, the front gate is the same and up to the door the same stones lie upon the walk. But within all are strangers.

The father and mother are past anxious inquiry of their son. The sisters are married or live, or have died, elsewhere. A new generation is all about. They never heard of him. The great event of that period, the sailing of that ship for California, is sometimes recalled by a few—a few rapidly diminishing. His name is all but forgotten. Some have a dim remembrance of him. In his time he was an important young man in the village. He set the fashion in collars and the newest style of plugs. O fame, how fleeting! What is a generation? A puff. A few old maids recollect him. What a pity, what a shame that we do all fade as a leaf!

The recollections treated in this chapter are to me as a commencement and an ending of the shadows of a series of coming events. PRENTICE MULFORD.



THE WILLAMETTE Land Company HOMESEEEKERS AND Investors

We have lots 50x200 feet, 100x200 feet, all favorably located. These lots twice the ordinary size are but half the usual price of other lots similarly located. We have one-acre, two-acre, five and ten-acre tracts, suitable for suburban homes, convenient to town, schools, churches, etc., and of very productive soil. A large, growing "Prune Orchard," of which we will sell part in small tracts to suit purchasers, and on easy terms.

Call and see us and get prices at Oregon City office or on Robert L. Taft at Portland office No. 50, Stark street, Portland.

Housing Work People.
At the twenty-fourth annual general meeting of the Artisans, Laborers and General Dwellings company (limited) the report showed that the income for the year 1890 amounted to more than \$130,000, the net revenue being \$85,000, out of which dividends amounting to \$54,604 had been paid. The increase of capital during the year had been \$110,100, with premiums amounting to \$14,407, the total amount paid up to Dec. 31 was \$1,757,500, the authorized capital being \$2,000,000 in ordinary shares and \$750,000 in preference shares, 44 per cent. The revenue and capital reserves now amount to \$83,149.

The completed estates of the company in London are Shaftesbury park, S. W., and Queen's park, W., comprising nearly 3,500 separate houses. At Noel park, N., at the close of the year 1,238 houses had been built, nearly all being let and occupied. This estate when completed will comprise 2,300 houses. An estate of sixty-six acres had been acquired at Streatham, and would be developed in the same manner as the other suburban parks of the company.

Block buildings have been erected in Lesson grove, Shepherd's place, Grosvenor square, Carpenter street, Berkeley square, Coldbath square, Rosebery avenue, Seymour place, East street, Marylebone and Rosoman street. Nine hundred and fifty-two tenements, comprising 3,278 rooms, had been let as soon as they were ready for occupation. Other block buildings are in progress at East street, Marylebone, Shepherd's place, Grosvenor square and Rosoman street and Skinner street, Clerkenwell.

The company would, when work now in hand was completed, provide accommodation for some 70,000 persons. The houses and tenements were fully let, and the loss from arrears was exceedingly small. Mr. Farrant, deputy chairman, gave a full detailed statement as to the progress of the various properties of the company completed and in course of development, and referred to the appreciation of the buildings shown by the occupiers and the care taken to select the most suitable tenants. After replying to questions put by shareholders the report and accounts were adopted and a dividend of 5 per cent. declared.—London Times

Armstrong and Booth.
Dr. Armstrong, who died in Atlanta a few days ago of apoplexy, led a peculiarly romantic career. For years he furnished newspaper correspondents with material for wild stories, and numerous efforts were made to prove that he was identical with J. Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Abraham Lincoln. James H. Payson, of Sidney, O., who is in this city at present, knew him intimately in former days, and in referring to the matter said:

Dr. Armstrong spent several years in Sydney as a United Presbyterian preacher, and was noted for his eloquence and for the theatrical methods which he employed in the pulpit. During the war he mysteriously disappeared, but came to the front a few years later as an Episcopal clergyman.

He continued in the latter capacity until made the subject of two assaults by persons who believed him to be J. Wilkes Booth. He then went to Cincinnati, where he achieved through the newspapers an unenviable notoriety. For ten years nothing has been heard from him by his old associates. There is no doubt that he bore a remarkable resemblance to the assassin of Lincoln. He limped with his right leg and wore long, black hair, which those who associated

DISSOLUTION NOTICE.
Notice is hereby given, that the partnership existing between Fred Hesse and Chris Wagner, both of Oregon City, Clackamas county, Oregon, with the firm name of Hesse & Wagner, is this day dissolved. The business will be continued by the said partners, under the name of Fred Hesse, Oregon City, April 15, 1891.

School Tax Notice.
To the tax payers of school district No. 92, Clackamas county, Oregon.
The taxes of the above named district for 1891, are now due and must be paid to the collector at the office of F. C. Stevens, opposite the Court house, within sixty days from date of this notice or they will be returned as delinquent.
Clackamas county, Oregon, District No. 92, Oregon City, April 15, 1891.

Administrators Notice.
Notice is hereby given that the undersigned Charles Clayton, has been by the county court of the state of Oregon, for Clackamas county, duly appointed administrator of the estate of W. H. Clason, deceased. All persons having claims against said estate are required to present the same to me at the law office of Melville & Dresser, in Oregon City, in said county, with proper vouchers within six months from this date at 10 o'clock, A. M. to respond and furnish testimony in support of said alleged abatement.
Oregon City, Oregon, April 15, 1891.
Melville & Dresser and E. McDonnell, attorneys for administrator. 417-3-2

NOTICE.
U. S. LAND OFFICE, OREGON CITY, ORE., April 15, 1891.
Complaint having been entered at this office by Francis C. Cole against Thomas McCullough for abandoning his Homestead Entry No. 2661 dated March 12, 1889, upon the lots 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

NOTICE.
U. S. LAND OFFICE, OREGON CITY, ORE., April 15, 1891.
Complaint having been entered at this office by Wm. W. Henderson against Randolph E. Kibben for abandoning his Homestead Entry No. 2752 dated March 12, 1889, upon the lots 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476,