

THAT UNIVERSAL THIRST FOR GOLD

Has Influenced History in All Ages of the World.

The following is condensed from Tacitus-Annals XVI:

During the reign of Nero, a Carthaginian named Cesellius Bassus came to Rome and caused a great excitement by stating that on his own estate in Carthage he had found a deep cavern containing a great quantity of gold in crude ingots, such as were in use in the early ages of the world. He said also that Queen Dido, when she fled from Tyre and founded Carthage, brought this gold and deposited it in the cave, that so much wealth might not prove the bane of the new colony. This treasure, he said, was reserved to add to the splendor of Nero's reign.

Nero and the Roman citizens believed this story, and began to make lavish expenditures, public and private, on the strength of it. After a time the emperor sent his agents to transport the treasure to Rome; light galleys were fitted out, officered and manned by those selected for their fitness. In the mean time Rome was distracted by hope and fear, with doubt and expectation; no other subject was talked of. The common people believed everything, while men of reflection argued in a different manner. The expected treasure was the subject on which orators expatiated and poets exhausted their invention; the popular mind pictured the replacement of agriculture by mining, and believed that the gods were working miracles to bless the reign of Nero.

Nero held the same opinion, fiction passed for truth, and nothing was too hyperbolic for the credulity of the prince. He launched out into greater profusion than ever. Deluded by his hopes, and sure of a supply for years to come, he exhausted his treasury and began to anticipate his imaginary funds. "The expectation of enormous wealth made him the bubble of a madman and impoverished the public."

Bessus returned to Carthage and directed the men sent from Rome, and many hired laborers were to dig in many places, but no gold or cave was found, and he committed suicide.

Senonius refers to this circumstance in few words: "He, (Nero), was encouraged in all this wild and enormous profusion not only by the great revenue of the empire, but by the sudden hopes given him of an immense hidden treasure which Queen Dido, upon her flight from Tyre had brought with her to Africa. This, a Roman knight pretended to assure him, was still hid in some deep caverns and might with a little labor be recovered." (Lives of the Twelve Caesars, Nero, chapter 32.)

A somewhat similar condition of things existed in California and Nevada for several years after the discovery of the Comstock mines, which shows that human nature is the same in all ages, irrespective of dates.

Gold has but little intrinsic value, yet owing to its physical properties and the excessive labor required to obtain it, it is accepted as the standard, and it is the best known medium in which labor can be stored; the convenience of coin greatly facilitates the work of man. While I have found but little recorded in history in its favor, I am led by my studies to believe that this innocent, harmless metal, by an occult gift of nature as mysterious as magnetic attraction, has made history and influenced mankind to a remarkable degree.

In the study of this important subject

two aspects must be considered, for while it cannot be denied that the thirst for gold and its influence when acquired have been productive of much evil; on the other hand, it has played an important part in the advancement of the world and the betterment of mankind. History shows that the desire to possess gold has led to many important recorded events, from the day that the Argonauts sailed from Greece to the present time; the foundation of the grand science of chemistry was laid by the alchemists, whose only thought was to make gold. In search of gold, man has explored the most distant parts of the earth; to gather it when discovered, he has planted colonies and laid the foundation of new nations. With the enormous capital so acquired he has established extensive manufactures, which in turn have necessitated a proportionate commerce and the earth's population has been able for a time to live better than ever before.

The discovery and large production of gold in California, Australia and New Zealand stimulated commerce and manufactures more perhaps than any other event in modern history; and the successive discovery of the precious metal in British Columbia, South Africa, Alaska and elsewhere, has served to maintain conditions by the effect of which railroads have been built across the American continent, and many villages have become great cities, during one generation.

A transfer of population to new localities invariably follows a gold excitement. When old countries become over populous, discontent is engendered, which leads to dissension and war; in that condition the people become unhealthy and disease and famine result, by which surplus is naturally diminished; otherwise food sufficient for their support cannot be obtained; emigration is naturally slow, but stimulated by a gold excitement, colonists follow the gold seekers and the pressure is removed.

The area of fertile lands on the earth's surface is ample for the support of more than all the human beings who have lived at one time; but there must be some strong incentive to overcome the indolence of an over crowded community and love of home inherent in man. In time, colonists become independent nations, which not only create new markets, but by sending their raw products assist the mother country. The laws of nature, which in general act slowly, may be in some degree accelerated by the use of the precious metals in the hands of man.

It is a singular fact that Nature does at least part of her work by intermittent impulse, which may be seen exemplified in earthquakes, the flow of oil and gas-

wells, volcanic eruptions, the tides and waves of the sea, the circulation of blood in animals, and epidemics; animals and plants pass more or less of their time in sleep. This law seems to apply equally to gold excitements.

During long periods of uninterrupted prosperity, possible only while gold is abundant, over production and speculation prevail, labor is diverted from agriculture, and artisans and traders congregate in commercial centers; this unnatural condition brings its own punishment and a train of evils follows, to which attention is beginning to be drawn. It is impossible that present inflated conditions can long continue. It is an undoubted fact that all excitements are followed by corresponding depression; there are many alarming symptoms of a serious reaction in the not far distant future which may lead to contraction, falling prices and eventual return to conditions similar to those which existed before the golden age of the nineteenth century. While there is reason to believe that retrogression, already commenced, will be gradual, it may be safe to predict that the next half century will see as many important changes as the last.

The total gold product of the world,

from the discovery of America by Columbus to the year 1900, is, according to the report of the United States mint, in round numbers, nine thousand eight hundred and eleven million dollars, (\$9,811,000,000).


These figures, which I trust are without error, show how small a quantity of gold has served to keep the world in activity, if not turmoil, for four centuries; but small as it is, the stored labor they represent is too great for the human mind to conceive; they seem to confirm my opinion that if a single, solid mass of metallic gold in magnitude equal to that of a medium sized dwelling house, should by any possibility be discovered on or near the earth's surface, it would have little if any practical value, it would represent no stored labor and would be in excess of requirements.—H. G. Hanks in Mining and Engineering Review.

Timber and Homestead Filings.

Timber and homestead filings, as well as final proofs, can be made before Charles H. Chance, United States commissioner, office in First Bank of Sumpter building, Sumpter, thus saving applicants expense of a trip to La Grande.

No headaches from Giant powder.

FRED G. LAWSON



WHOLESALE AND RETAIL GROCER

We make a Specialty of Supplies for Miners.

Meinze's Celebrated Canned Goods and a Full Line of Groceries

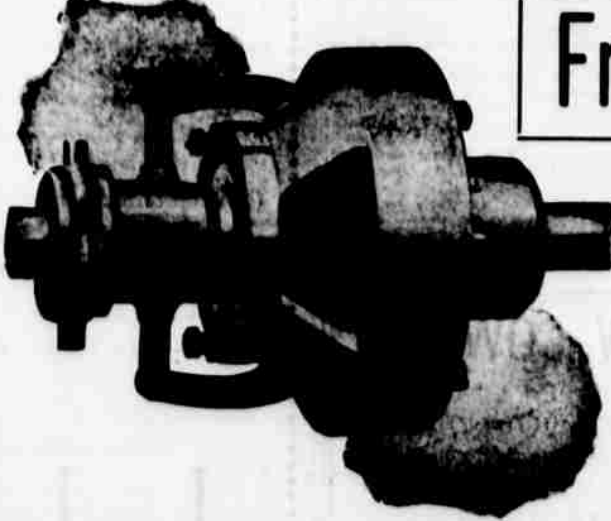
Opera House Block
Phone 345
Sumpter, Oregon.

American Brewing and Crystal Ice Co.
E. SIBER, General Manager.

Manufacturers of

First Class Draught and Bottled BEER. **Also Ice Made of Distilled Water.**

The most modern equipped plant in the state.
All orders promptly attended to.
Telephone, Main 15. BAKER CITY, OREGON.



Friction Clutch

COUPLINGS
— AND —
PULLEYS

POWERFUL, SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE

FOR FURTHER PARTICULARS ADDRESS

WILLAMETTE IRON AND STEEL WORKS

PORTLAND, OREGON

POWER, TRANSMISSION MACHINERY A SPECIALTY.
CORRESPONDENCE SOLICITED