

THE GOLDEN DAYS OF '49.

Hampton's Magazine, is beginning in December a remarkably interesting series on mining and American mines, which should be of great value to all people possessing mining stock or thinking of investing in mining stock.

With its usual thoroughness, Hampton's has chosen Eugene P. Lyle, Jr., one of the most accurate of American journalists, and has kept him in the mining fields for many months preparing the material for this series. The first article is called 'The Lure of Gold.' In February 1848, California belonged to Mexico. Scattered over the country there were not 10,000 white men, all told. Our vast West, practically from the Mississippi to the Pacific, was new virgin territory. One of the first pioneers was John A. Sutter, a Swiss, once a captain in the French Army, who settled in the Sacramento Valley to grow and export wheat. He built a fort as protection against the Indians, and then a sawmill on the Sacramento. James Wilson Marshall, an unlettered American from the Middle States, had charge of building the mill.

"One day (in January, 1848) something yellow that glistened at the bottom of the mill race caught Marshall's eye. It was metal, held in a cervice of soft granite. Marshall beat the metal out, and it was malleable. Sutter tried nitric acid on it. The stuff was gold, the first nugget was of a billion and a quarter dollars in gold to come from California.

"Then began a gold rush, such as had never happened before and never can happen again. The fever started with Sutter's own men. They deserted the mill, and began washing gold, an ounce, two ounces a day. There was possible fifty white men in the valley, and every one of them was soon at the pans and sluices. Settlers hitched up their teams and moved to the diggings, there families with them. Mexican vaqueros leaped into their saddles and headed for the golden Sacramento. The news reached San Francisco and the small town was emptied of its adult population. Then, by shiploads, from across the Pacific, from China, from the Sandwich Islands, from Australia, from Central America, or from the East and Europe, rounding South Africa, came the gold seekers.

"Within a year after Marshall's strike there were 20,000 men in the diggings. In another year there were 100,000, and that year they took \$50,000,000 out of the placers. In 1853 they took out \$63,000,000 over gold fields 600 miles long and covering 8,000,000 acres."—From Hampton's Magazine

NOT THE U. M. W.'s NOR McLAUGHLAN'S WAY.

While the operators of the United States are making efforts to form a combination in order that they may get better prices for their coal, and that they may be in a position to give better wages to their men, the U. M. W.'s are busily engaged in Nova Scotia in an effort to compel the operators to reduce the price of coal in order, operators to reduce the price of coal in order, to this is certainly the only possible conclusion—to compel operators to reduce wages. The Coal Trade Journal referring to the movement in the United States for co-operation says:

"It is stated by one of the heaviest coal producers of

this district that the operators have been for years trying to make cost and price meet in a way that would yield profit by bearing down on the coal instead of working upward on price; that, in this, they have fought the miners at tremendous cost, and at expense of safety in their mines. Now, he says, the time has come to put their energies in effort to secure a price that will enable the miner to be compensated for his greater hazards, and the required higher skill he is called upon to exert, and a price that will permit operators to install those methods that the mining departments of every coal mining State are not only urging, but commanding shall be supplied.

"For one," said this operator, "I am tired of fighting the miners every day of my work-a-day life in order to reduce the cost of mining. I am now for a general cooperative move to secure for the miner a fair wage, to surround him with decent and comfortable environments, and to lend him all the aid we can in qualifying him for the greater skill that deeper and larger mine areas require of him. We must do this to insure ourselves against dangers that are inevitable with men of inexperience and little general or special knowledge of the dangers with which they are surrounded."

The great explosion and fire which occurred ten days ago in an Illinois mine differs in one respect from many of the big catastrophes which have occurred at coal mines: There is no doubt as to the cause of the horror. Carelessness is responsible. When the cause of explosions has not been revealed there were many who laid all the blame on the greed of the operators. So far we have read no violent or other socialistic utterances warning the workmen against carelessness. It is no part of the programme of the extreme socialist to publish the truth. Legislation can do much in the way of reducing accidents; rigid discipline can do more. Mr. Jas. Roderick, chief of the United States Department of Mines, holds that carelessness of officials and employees must be held responsible for a majority of accidents. He says:

"An official may ride up a slope in a coal car, which is contrary to law, and his only excuse is that he is in a hurry. Often when an official sees a workman neglect in his duty or violating some law of safety he will merely reprimand him, instead of discharging him, as he should do, because he knows that some other operator will at once hire him, and as he needs workmen he thinks he might as well retain him. In many ways the officials take chances that are hazardous and that are detrimental to the discipline that should be exercised over the workmen.

"The great number of fatalities that occur in the Pennsylvania mines show the necessity for remedial measures. Legislation of the proper kind would no doubt bring about a reduction, but the most prolific cause, carelessness on the part of mine officials and employees, can be removed only by greater discipline; discipline that will enforce obedience to the law and rules governing safety; discipline that will mete out severe punishment to the man in charge and to the employee who by their carelessness and recklessness place in constant jeopardy the lives of the men in the mines."