

GOLD: IN THE MINE, THE MINT, AND THE WORKSHOP.

IN September, 1847, one Captain Suter or Sutter was a bold, prosperous, enterprising, intelligent settler in Upper California. He was a Swiss by birth; he had served Charles X. as one of the Swiss Guard at the Tuileries; he emigrated to Missouri after the Bourbon revolution of 1830; he removed thence to the Oregon territory in 1836; he made a farther advance in 1839 to California, where he built a fort named New Helvetia on the river Sacramento; he gradually accumulated around him 4000 oxen, 1500 horses and mules, 2000 sheep, a vast acreage of land under grain crops, and two trading vessels in the river; he had his fort supplied with twelve pieces of artillery, and defended by a garrison of seventy men; and he was thus, in all probability, the wealthiest and most influential man beyond the Rocky Mountains. The month above named was an important one to this bold captain, and to the world at large. He contracted with a Mr. Marshall to construct a saw-mill near a pine forest. The supply of water to this mill was so situated as to wash down much mud and gravel from the higher course of the stream; and Mr. Marshall, watching the progress of his works one day, saw some glittering particles in this mud. He formed his own conclusions of the nature of these shining morsels; and having shown some of them to the Captain, it was agreed to keep the matter a secret for a time. Such secrets, however, do not keep; they *will* not keep: it was soon noised abroad that gold had been discovered at the American Fork of the Sacramento, and a gold fever thereupon sprang up. A few labourers collected some of the gold-dust, and took it for sale to San Francisco, at which town the Sacramento enters the Pacific; hundreds flocked up the river; Indians were hired, soldiers and sailors deserted, shopkeepers closed their shops, and San Francisco became almost abandoned. Two men, employing a hundred Indians, got 17,000 dollars' worth of gold in a short time; another party, 12,000; and another, 16,000. In two or three months, one store-keeper at Suter's Fort sold goods for 36,000 dollars' worth of gold-dust.

Such was the opening scene of the Californian drama, which has since set the whole world in commotion. It is to this gold, and to gold generally—its obtainment and its application, its uses and its "curiosities"—that the present sheet will be devoted.

THE GOLD MINES OF PAST AGES.

The world has never known a period (within historic limits, at least) when gold was not cherished and valued highly. Whether it is because this beautiful metal presents a brilliant colour and lustre, or because it is little affected