

In the distance, toward the right, may be seen the main hoist of the Utica and Chlorination Gold Mines.



## The Utica Gold Mine.

How John Selkirk sold it for £10, and Charles Lane took £1,400,000 from it.

**By F. B. Millard.**

ALL from overwork on a worthless quartz claim in the foothills of the Sierras, and with a nostalgic ache in his heart, John Selkirk rode his tired mule into Angel's Camp. It was that same Angel's of which Bret Harte has romanced and sung, but it knew not of any romancer or singer in those days of delving and eager seeking after gold.

John Selkirk came in the dry summer of 1854, when men who had made their way to California to dig for gold were scratching all over Calaveras County, eagerly prospecting for the yellow metal. They were burrowing in the red earth like gophers; they were changing the courses of streams and washing out their old beds; they were shoveling gravel like mad, and rocking and sluicing and overhauling the face of nature generally.

Silently John Selkirk rode through the slovenly little camp without a word to anybody and with barely a look to right or left. Coming to a bushy place on a hillside a little way beyond the last shanty, he stopped and tied his mule to a scrub oak. He unpacked his blankets, his pick, shovel, and pan from the back of his saddle and carelessly threw them down on the earth. Then

he built a fire, put his coffee upon it to boil, and prepared a scrappy dinner of which he ate only a small part. He lay idly about on the ground for a while after dinner, smoking his pipe and thinking of home.

"I've had enough of this California country," he said to himself. "I'll light out of here in a few hours and go back to the folks."

A noisy jay interrupted his meditations, yelling at him scoldingly from the brush. The harsh sound disturbed him and, without getting up, he irritably looked about for something to throw at the bird. With his eyes upon the ground and his beard sweeping over it, he paused suddenly in his search and picked up a small grey stone. He was raising it to fling it at the jay, when of a sudden his eye caught in the grain of the stone the glint of a yellow gold. He broke the little piece of quartz into fragments with the back of his hand axe. The pieces were heavy with gold. Then he began eagerly to search about for more outcroppings. At the base of a small mass of rocks he made a good-sized prospect hole and found rich and still richer specimens. It "looked right," he said, and he was satisfied with the



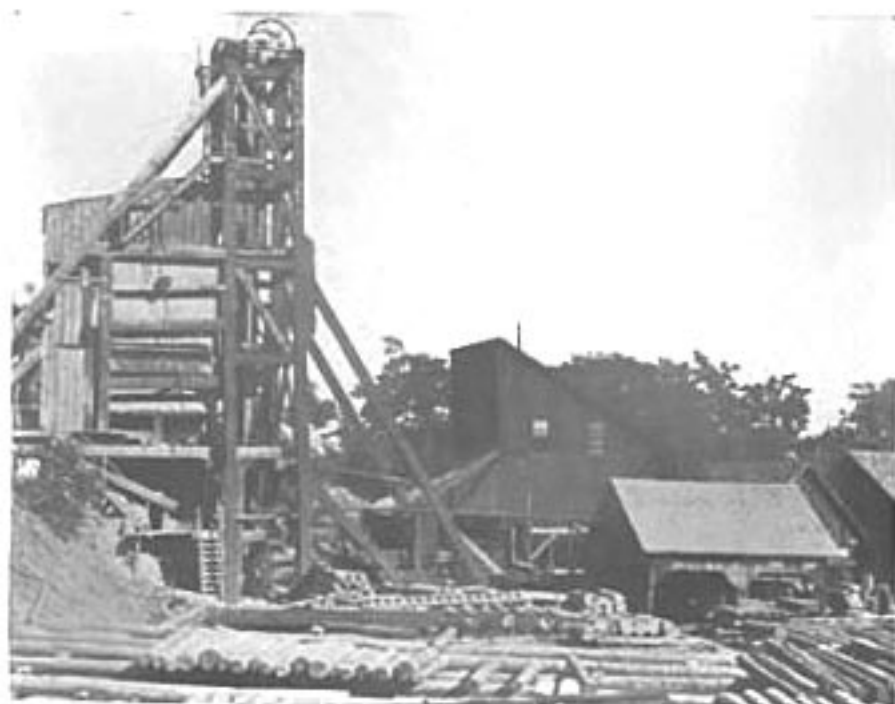
*The Cross Hoisting Works.*

prospect. So he cut some sticks from the oak tree, and driving them into the earth at four corners of a rectangular piece of hillside containing fifteen or twenty acres, he staked the great Utica Mine, the richest known gold deposit in California.

John Selkirk worked hard for the next few months. The ceaseless toil, day after day, with pick and drill took all the spring out of the man. He found little gold near the sur-



*The Chlorination Works.*



*The Stickle Hoist.*

The logs are ready to use for supporting the "stopes" or excavations.

face, but on going deeper he came upon a rich ledge, some of the rock containing £40 in gold to the ton.

He went to Sacramento and to Benicia and laid his case before men of wealth.

"You can make a heap of money by going in with me," he said to them, "and I can make money, too, but I must have help. It is a good mine, wonderfully rich. Look at these specimens."

But wise Mammon smiled in-

credulously. As if John Selkirk were the only man with a hole in the ground into which good money could be sunk! As if John Selkirk's piece of glittering quartz selected from the richest pocket in the mine, or, perhaps, from another hole a hundred miles from it, bore any significance! There had been others with mines and specimens. To Mammon the prospect was not alluring. It wished him well of his mine, but would none of it.

Back again to Angel's, and

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back again to another month of wearying, wearing work. Then John Selkirk became more homesick and heartsick than ever. A prospecting party came along, looked down into the hole and saw the dirty, sweat-stained miner wearily pecking away at the hard rock.

"What have you got down there?" asked one of the new-comers.

"Biggest thing in the world," said

to a far-away smoke-hazed butte. He looked that way for a minute, and then said:

"I'll tell you, I'm sick and worn out, and if you'll give me two hundred dollars to get home on I'll let you have it."

The men went down in the mine and looked about by the light of Selkirk's candle. They broke some of the ore, but did not like the look of it.



*The Sixty-Stamp Utica Hoist and Mill.*

Selkirk, coming up the ladder and sitting down to rest and talk in the bright sunshine.

"Want to sell?" asked one of the party.

"Yes, I *would* sell, if I could get my price."

"What is your price?"

John Selkirk's eye ran up the slope

"We'll give you fifty dollars," said the spokesman. "It doesn't look like much, does it, Jim?"

"No," said Jim. "Fifty's a big price."

"All right," said Selkirk very wearily, "I'll take it."

"And throw in the mule?"

"No, siree, I need him to get down to the river on."



*Cars of Ore from the Gold Cliff Mine.*

thrifty men and did not know all there was to know about quartz mining. Then, too, they were almost as poor as John Selkirk.

When they received their bullion from the smelter, there were many ways for it to go, and what they divided among them after the monthly debts were paid was not much. One by one the mine workers of the Selkirk claim became disgusted and left the camp to look for better properties. The last man took a contemptuous look into the shaft one day, found that it was half full of water, and in a fit of disgust packed up his little kit and left the place.

So again the great mine, with all its wonderful store of wealth, was abandoned. Weeds grew up in the track of the old ore cars, the twenty-stamp mill was dismantled, being carried off piecemeal by the miners of the neighbourhood, some of whom were taking much yellow gold from the ground. In fact, Angel's had come to be regarded as one of

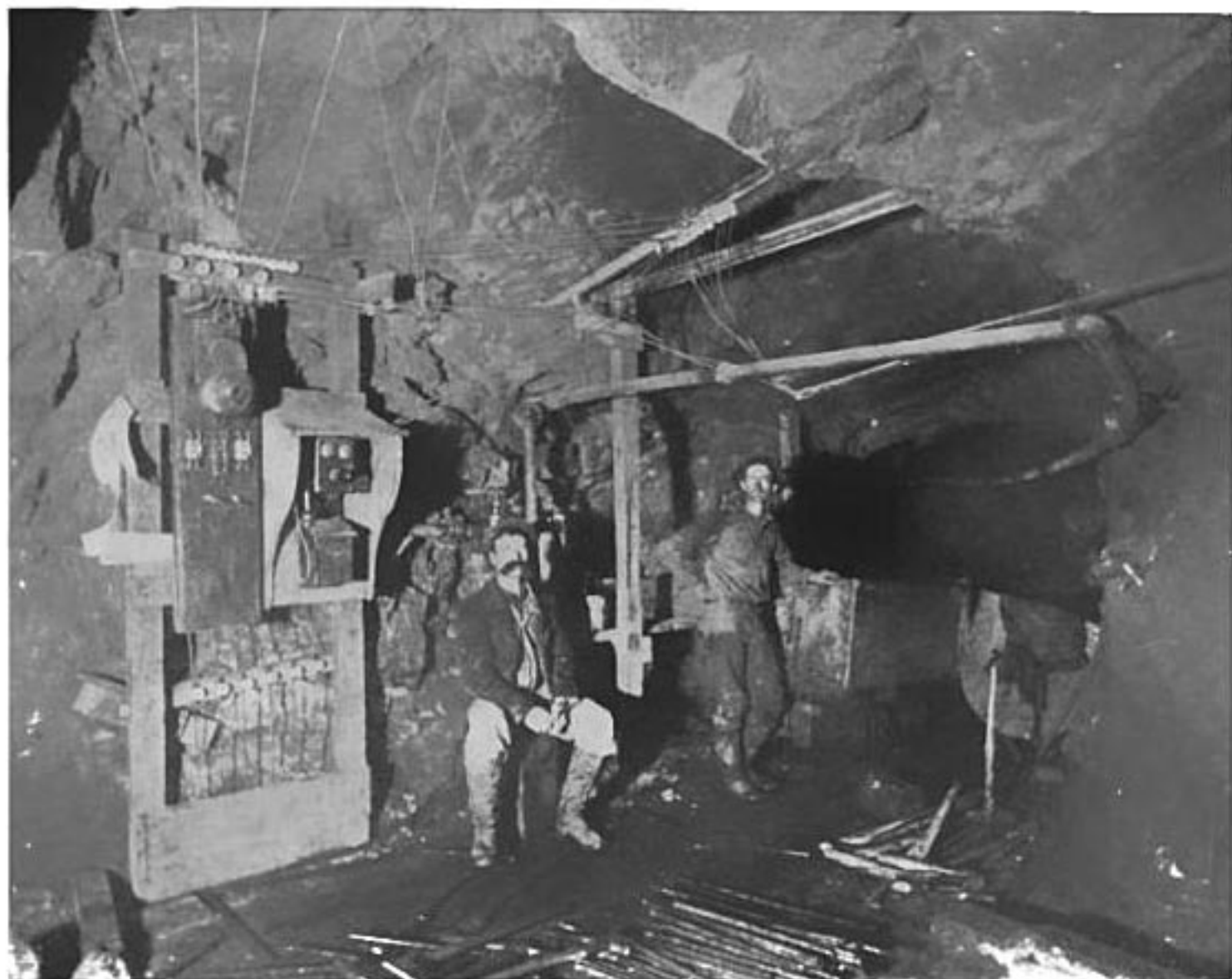
The price was paid, and so for a mean little ten pounds the great Utica Mine was sold by its original discoverer, who, had he stuck to it, might have made the name of Selkirk as mighty in the money marts of California as that of Mackay or of Huntington or of Stanford.

But the men who bought the mine did not know what they were buying. They never had the discerning power of John Selkirk, who knew when he gave it up that he was giving away millions. They opened the vein more freely and set up a twenty-stamp mill. But they were not



*An Ore Train in the Mine.*

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*A Station in the Utica Mine.*

the best camps in California. From the time that Henry Angel and James H. Carson found gold there in 1848 it had been esteemed a "good camp." Stories were being told of rich quartz strikes and marvellous pay ore. The stories reached Sacramento, and a young man full of plans for money-getting and full of that certain shrewdness which begets money heard them. This man was James G. Fair, who at that time had about a thousand pounds, all he possessed, in one little sack of dirty "town dust," which did not represent in value more than three-fourths the same amount in good, clean, honest dust from the mines, being adulterated with black sand as it passed from trader to trader.

Young Fair took the stage for Angel's. With a trusted guide he looked

all over the camp, and at last he came to Selkirk's hole-in-the-ground.

"What's down in there?" he asked, peering into the old shaft.

"Nothing but water," said the trusted guide. "There's a good property back on the hill there that I want to show you."

"But I'm going to see this first," said Fair. Pulling off his coat and taking a candle in his hand, he prepared to descend the ladder.

"Look out, Fair! It's old and rotten," said the trusted guide, referring to the ladder.

But Fair was half way down the shaft and into a drift to which the water had not reached. He held his candle on this side and on that, and sniffed about for the dangerous drift damp which is



*Descending the Shaft.*

known to lurk in old mines. He picked up several pieces of straggling quartz that had been chipped off by the last

workers in the mine, and came out with these to the shaft and up the rickety ladder into the sunlight.

Soon afterward an expert miner went carefully through the drifts of the old Selkirk mine, and a few weeks later a skip was at work bailing out the stagnant liquid from the hole.

"Somebody's working the old Selkirk mine," they said in a camp gathering.

But though the gold flowed into Fair's coffers from the Utica, there were seasons of much discouragement.

Fair knew that the Utica was a mine of magnificent prospects, but he also knew that it was baffling, rebellious, and expensive. His few thousands had brought him in many thousands, but he was not satisfied.

So, with the gold he had taken from the Utica, Fair bought mines in the richest centres of the great Comstock ledge. He prospered with dazzling quickness. Soon he joined with Flood, Mackay, and O'Brien and in the Hale and Norcross mine these four men made their first million. Within a short time this was doubled and trebled. Fair bought more mines, and more riches became his. He left the slow old Utica to take care of itself, and went on amassing wealth until he had gained an enormous estate—an estate famous in his own day, and more famous since his death and the desperate fight made over it by his heirs in court.

When James G. Fair abandoned the Utica, the mill he built was dismantled, and the timbering in the shafts and stopes, as well as the buildings and the plant generally were left to the mercy of marauders and the unkindly elements. Here it was, ready to make any man's fortune, but nobody wanted it. Everybody knew it was a hard nut to crack. Above



*Miners coming off the Shift of the Utica Mine.*



*The Man at the Hoist.*

ground and below, the Utica presented the appearance of a picturesque ruin when, in 1880, Charles D. Lane bought it for \$10,000. Lane was warned against making the purchase.

"Nobody can make anything out of a mine that Jim Fair has abandoned," they said to him.

"Fair is a shrewd man," replied Lane, "and he rarely lets go of a good thing that has any money in it; but I'm going to begin where he left off, and see what I can do."

Lane's friends solemnly assured each other that he was going crazy.

"It's a fool's scheme," they said. "The mine is nothing but a prospective, with three or four hundred feet of development work. Any man must be a lunatic who would try to work that rock."

Lane had very little money, but he had some ideas. Whether he derived these from a real knowledge of mining affairs, or whether he got them from the spirit world it is hard to say. There is

a Mrs. Robinson, a spirit medium in San Francisco, who stoutly avers that it was she who told Lane of the real worth of the Utica. This esoteric adept declares that she can take a piece of quartz in her hand, and that, without removing the paper or cloth in which it is wrapped she can tell all there is worth knowing

about it. She says that Lane was boarding at her house at the time he was examining the Utica prospect.

"A man named Hunt had a bond on the Utica," says Mrs. Robinson, "but he failed to make the mine pay. Mr. Lane, who had been looking into it, brought a piece of rock from the prospect and put it into my hands.

'That is your fortune,' I said, holding up the rock. 'There isn't any doubt about it. Stick to that mine, and you'll be a millionaire.'

Lane was not convinced, but secretly sent quartz specimens to the medium by different persons. In every case the spirits declared the mine to be rich, and



Ledge overhead in "Upraise" of the Utica Mine. Discovering the Veins of Gold.



so finally Lane set to work to raise money to buy the Utica. The money was gathered together at last, and, despite his wife's declaration that no good would come of it, Lane became the owner of the mine.

He worked hard year after year in the big burrow, and his wife had plenty

of opportunity for "I-told-you-so's." Still he persevered. He took out some gold, but the rich ore was not yet in sight. Lane had a sort of bulldog pertinacity which stood him in good stead in his attempt to develop the Utica, which he persisted in, though he exhausted every penny of his own re-

sources and was about three thousand pounds in debt. His credit was entirely exhausted, and he was considered a mild sort of mining crank. Those who knew him were not surprised at the way he stuck to what seemed a hopeless enterprise. He was a hardy specimen of vigorous manhood, and remains so to-

day, in his sixty-fifth year—tall, raw-boned, and fit to fight his way anywhere. He could "stay with his work" until other men had dropped from exhaustion. In those fighting days there was not an ounce of superfluous flesh on him. He could then, and he can now, undergo much privation and hardship, and issue

forth from each succeeding ordeal none the worse for wear. He can remain in wet clothes and rubber boots all day.

But while he was such a giant for endurance, he was easy with the men of the mine, and was to them, as he is to all who know him now, a congenial companion and all-round



*Measuring a ledge in face of Drift.*

"good fellow."

"You had better give it up, Charley," said Mrs. Lane to her husband, when, deep in debt and all his credit gone, the plucky miner looked desperately about for assistance.

"Not yet," was the quiet reply. "There's gold there, and I'm going to



*Starting a Raise.*

"The miners working straight up through the roof to the surface, many hundreds of feet."

have it." And the resolute man kept pegging away, determined to win the vast deposits of rich metal which the spirits had promised he should get out of the mine.

It was at this low tide of the Lane fortune that a gaunt, shambling figure appeared in Angel's. The figure was conspicuous because it was one of the few ever seen there topped by a stiff silk hat. From under the brim of the hat peered the sharp eyes of Alvinza Hayward, one of the shrewdest of the old-time mining men of the coast. Hayward had a little money, and Lane, hearing he was in town, determined to interest him in the Utica. The newcomer examined the prospect. Lane wanted Hayward to advance him money enough

to pay his debts and enable him to prosecute the work. Six thousand pounds would do it. But Hayward could not raise so much capital. He induced a man named W. S. Hobart, who had some money, to join him, and an arrangement was finally made by which Lane surrendered to the two other men two-thirds of the Utica property, and retained one-third himself, the mine remaining under his superintendence.

Lane paid his debts, increased the working force, and within a few months the report went ringing through Angel's and all over the coast that a large body of rich ore had been struck in the Utica Mine. The report was true. The spirits had "read the rock" aright. Here were millions of gold right at hand for the mere digging.

"What did I tell you?" asked Lane of his wife. "Didn't I say



*At Work in "Stopes."*

you'd be wearing diamonds? Those spirits never lie."

He and his partners grimly exulted over their new fortunes. But they were quiet men. There was no wild hurrah, no violent conviviality. They kept at their work.

And now there was a great stir at Angel's. Hundred's of men were set to work at the Utica. Stamp mills of the most improved design were erected, as well as reduction works and metal-saving machinery for working the tailings and getting the last response from Mother Earth that she could be made to give in gold.

It was determined to follow the almost vertical vein by probing straight down into the ground to any depth that might be necessary to reach and bring up the richest quartz. A shaft four by eight feet with two compartments was sunk. The cost of this was considerable, being at the rate of £3 10s. a foot, and only two feet a day could be excavated. The same harsh and baffling conditions were encountered as those which had resisted Selkirk and Fair, but no efforts were spared in preparing to wrest the gold from the bowels of the earth.

It was Homeric labour. Far in the forest an army of men were cutting down yellow pines, and more men were loading them upon wagons hauled by long teams to the mine. Other men were sewing and hewing the great timbers, and were lowering them by cables down deep into the earth, and still others were setting them up and bolting them fast to keep the treacherous walls from breaking down and destroying the miners who were plying their drills and moving mountains of rock to be hoisted



*"Spitting" the Fuse.*

aloft by great engines, and be crushed by other engines, and washed and sifted and strained in the gathering of the golden specks for which men give their best blood.

Four shafts have been sunk in the ledge, the deepest being nearly two thousand feet. One of these has been almost entirely retimbered twice with pine and oak, involving much expense

and much loss of time in mining.

So that while the present owners have tamed the rebellious Utica, and made it the great gold-bearing power that it is, it has cost them thousands to do it. But the returns have been colossal.

And now Bret Harte's Angel's was in a fair way to forget itself and its old traditions. The opening of the rich quartz deposit was a great thing for the quiet, sleepy little town. It changed its rough aspect completely.

The Utica is the greatest gold mine on the Pacific Coast, one of the wonders of wonderful California. It is a place of potent fascination to the traveller, and it well repays a student of mining to make careful observation of the methods pursued in taking out and treating the quartz.

"The Utica runs Angel's," is the saying there, and, in turn, Angel's runs the Utica, for there is where the real masters of the mine, the men of brawn who delve in its deeps and darks, reside. They



*Air-drilling Face of Drift.*



*A Miner. Character Sketch.*

have braved its terrors of caving earth, its foul damp, its roaring blasts, and the subterranean sea of flames that has run through the drifts and shafts, demons of the underland, seeking out men to destroy them.

It was these dauntless men who, under their brave leader, Superintendent Tom Lane, fought the big fire of July, 1895. Each year they had been putting twelve thousand great forest trees into the mine, and the element which destroys dead wood had always been ready to consume the miles of dry timbering. Nobody knows how the fire began. In the evening Alex McDonald and David Elmer, going to their stope near the Pig Pen chute, on the eight-hundred-foot level, heard a wild crackling, and encountered a great volume of smoke. They ran back and gave the alarm. Soon an army of men under the generalship of Superintendent Lane were hastening down to the Pig Pen. The leaders were driven back by the deathly fumes from the cauldron beyond. Some

of the miners were overcome by the gas and fell flat. Their companions dragged them out of danger and resuscitated them.

"Put up a bulkhead—here!" shouted Lane.

The men, half-blinded by the smoke and choking with the fumes, set to work. They piled high a breastwork of timbers and stones to keep the flames within bounds, and smother them, if possible. But hardly had the bulkhead been built before there was a tremendous explosion, and the whole mass of which it was composed was blown back, the fragments scattering far. Luckily, none of the brave workers were killed, though many were nearly suffocated, and required medical assistance at once. Other bulkheads were built, but the gas formed behind each of them, and they were blown away as it ignited from the flames. Explosion after explosion could be heard inside the mine, and there was a rattling of stones and a crashing of earth as the timbers gave way.

"Well," said Lane, "there's only one thing to be done now—fill her up with water. Start the engines there! Get your monitors to work!"

This flooding of the great mine meant the loss of thousands of pounds and a long delay. Ninety hours there were from the time the big



*Miners at work Cross-cutting from a Station.*

monitors began to discharge their great streams into the mine to the time when the last blazing stick of pine was submerged.



*In the "Stopes."*

Then began the work of hoisting the water out of the mine. Night and day for eight weeks the great skips and pumps, regular and extra — all that he could set to work — were kept constantly employed. When the



*Dumping the Waste.*

water was lowered sufficiently, the miners went back to their damp stations, and soon the drills were clanking again.

And what has been done with the gold taken from the great mine?

Hayward has used his money to make money, and certainly the influence of his share of the Utica gold has been widely felt. Under the advice of the spirits he has invested in various other mines, nearly all of which have been productive. He has bought large areas of land in California, and buildings and lots. He owns one of the tallest skyscrapers in San Francisco, a great store and office building, erected at the behest of his spiritual guides. He has a large villa tract in San Mateo. Here in a fine mansion, surrounded by beautiful, well-kept grounds, a deer park, and ample conservatories, he lives and enjoys life in a quiet way.



*Clean-up of Mill.*

## THE UTICA GOLD MINE.

It is difficult to differentiate between Lane and Hayward when it comes to their belief in spirits. Undoubtedly it is the truth to say that they are both devout believers. To them the occult as a governing force is as important as the rise and fall of the markets, and as real. It enters into all their daily calculations. They are both reverent believers in spiritualism, and the arguments for their faith, which they will sometimes advance to their friends, are many and often convincing.

Hobart, the man whom Hayward induced to join him in the Utica enterprise, did not live to enjoy his share of the gold. He died in 1893, leaving an enormous estate. His interest in the Utica is now owned by his son, Walter S. Hobart.

As for Lane, who struggled so long to develop the Utica, and who has had his share of the gold, his investments at home and far afield have prospered exceedingly. He has not gone in for town lots or country lands. With him it has been mines, mines, mines. Utica gold, under spiritual guidance, was directed to La Fortuna Mine, in Arizona. This is one of the great bonanzas of the Pacific Coast, and from its veins were taken

the largest pockets of high-grade ore ever dug from the depths of any American mine. A large number of stamps are pounding there at present, and the prospect for future wealth is said to be very great.

Utica gold has gone north to breed more gold in the Arctic. Mr. Lane has put more money into Alaskan mining enterprises than any other man in the world. He has sailed ships to Nome freighted with all manner of mining-camp supplies. He has built stores and warehouses and piled up mountains of coal on the Arctic beach, where fuel was not, and carried much lumber there. He built and equipped the northernmost railroad in the world, that from Nome to Anvil City, on which I travelled last summer in a journey over the tundra to the wonderful placers which Mr. Lane was developing along the bleak Anvil Creek. To see Lane seated on a rough bench on a flat car, swaying and rocking over the great marsh, one would not recognise in him the millionaire. But there I saw the man who had the grit to take up the Utica when shrewd James G. Fair had abandoned it, and spend his money like water before a penny was returned.



*A Station in the Utica Mine.*