

GOLD SEEKERS INVADE TERRA DEL FUEGO

MOST DESOLATE SPOT ON EARTH TAKING ON THE HALCYON ASPECT OF 'FRISCO IN '49.

NOTABLE in the affairs of the world to-day is the enormous increase in the output of gold. In a comparatively brief period, the product has almost doubled, and in the fierce quest for the yellow metal lies this story of the redemption by American and British enterprise of the most desolate, dreary and hopeless edge of the earth—land's end of this rolling ball, the jumping off place, sinister as the pit itself. If Terra del Fuego is ever made healthful, or even habitable, that triumph will forever shine as a hope against the worst here or hereafter.

Had Ferdinand Magellan, when his adventurous squadron graced with lifting keels on the shoals of his stormy strait, ever dreamed that his ships had crunched into sands of gold the great circumnavigator would in all likelihood have gone no further. But he knew nothing of the treasure that lay hidden in the strait, and remained undiscovered and unsuspected until found by wretched, wandering convicts in the early eighties of the last century.

The discovery made a furor in Buenos Ayres. A fierce flush of gold fever seized the European and Yankee colonies of Argentina, and a concourse of ignorant, desperate men, mostly criminals, set sail in Antarctic galleys, and headed for the cursed little convict camp set midway in the Straits of Magellan by the Argentine government. Having for the venture little knowledge, less sense, a confusion of tongues and a shattering equipment, they yet found much fine gold—gold which the wild Atlantic had garnered, beached and treasured in the stormiest place in all of the seven seas. Fine weather, gaudy stream and ocean are the eternal primal elements of gold, ruby, diamond and platinum miners of the world.

News of the first success hurried abroad brought many, some say thousands, mostly Austrians. These wandered in rain, sleet and snow in hopeless despair, combating the heaviest, with bloody fingers by day, fighting, murdering and dying by night, and all the time drinking a devil's distillation of absolute and Bahia rum.

The adventures of these adventurers make rich the story of the southern sea, skin to those of the lands where the red gods call. And there, in whispered awe, the name of Julius Popper is yet spoken with bated breath.

Popper was an Anglo-Austrian, a flying Dutchman of wealth, able, the fog and storms around the Horn. With a fortune of a million, secrecy and mercury he made a start. He got together a semi-military outfit, then appropriated by military leaders and notorious denouncements the best gold beaches around San Sebastian Bay. Strangers or Indians, so thick as to fray near his diggings were turned back or turned over, by grace of Winchester, to the care of his own Austrian countrymen, ten-pennying these down to the beach, in thunder and lightning, under a heavy flat canvas cover, and for days at a time. When liberated they vomited and never bothered Popper again.

Popper Issued Coin.

Full of resource, Popper sought to turn every wheel. He actually issued gold coin, when all South America was on some rate or fictitious money bottom—one and five dollar pieces, stamped with crossed pick and shovel, and whose superscription was "Popper." These are now numismatic gems. But Popper loved tropical Peru too well, and in an evil day got an overdose of knockout drops in Buenos Ayres, and the world knew him no more.

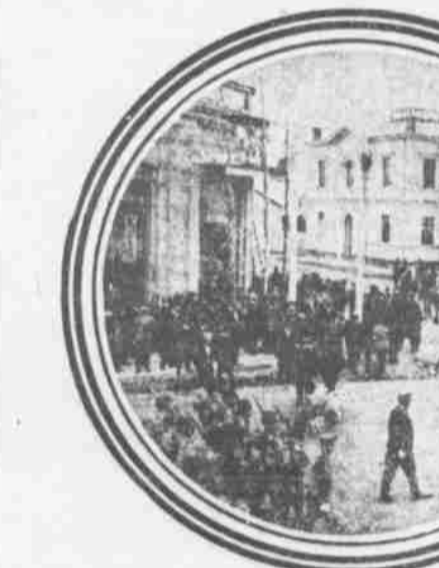
After Popper things languished. Organized labor ceased. Chaos and the elements resumed their reign. The country had never comprehended its wealth and resources. It merely had assumed there was gold all over the surface of the country, but too thin to pay. Everything lay hidden, awaiting the man, and the man eventually appeared in the person of Lieutenant Edison W. Sutphen, a young, Kent-County, Maryland, graduate from Annapolis in 1882. In 1887, in the United States gunboat Alliance, he cruised through the innumerable islands, islets and flocks of America's Antarctic archipelago, studying land and sea. Amazing was the sweep of this fledgling from far North. Charles Darwin, reading the soul of nature like a scroll, lingered for weeks in Terra del Fuego and saw only desolation and darkness. Britain had surveyed, sounded and sounded the island for every and any natural or commercial purpose.



CAMP AT RIO VERDE

ability. Then a striking tid a masterpiece of spur-of-the-moment thinking and the name of Julius Popper is yet spoken with bated breath.

On her homeward trip the Alliance lay in Buenos Ayres long enough to convince young Sutphen that the Argentines did not know much about asphalt, furthermore,



PUNTA ARENAS, SOUTHERN MOST TOWN OF THE WORLD

he discovered that the government contemplated letting a concession for asphalt in the city. The young lieutenant saw in this an opportunity and, having served his country for more than two years on small pay and slow promotion, decided to take up the venture of resignation. After his resignation had been accepted by the Navy Department he secured the contract, asphalted the city and, having thus gained a start in the financial world, turned his



GOLD BEARING STREAM

attention to his cherished scheme of mining for gold in and around Terra del Fuego. The wonders of the new gold dredging plants in New Zealand had come in frequent reports, and with the reports a realization that these same methods might avail in this bleak south land. Following many preliminary borings, denouncements and claims, the best gold bearing lands were silently secured. Everything of promise was taken in without opposi-

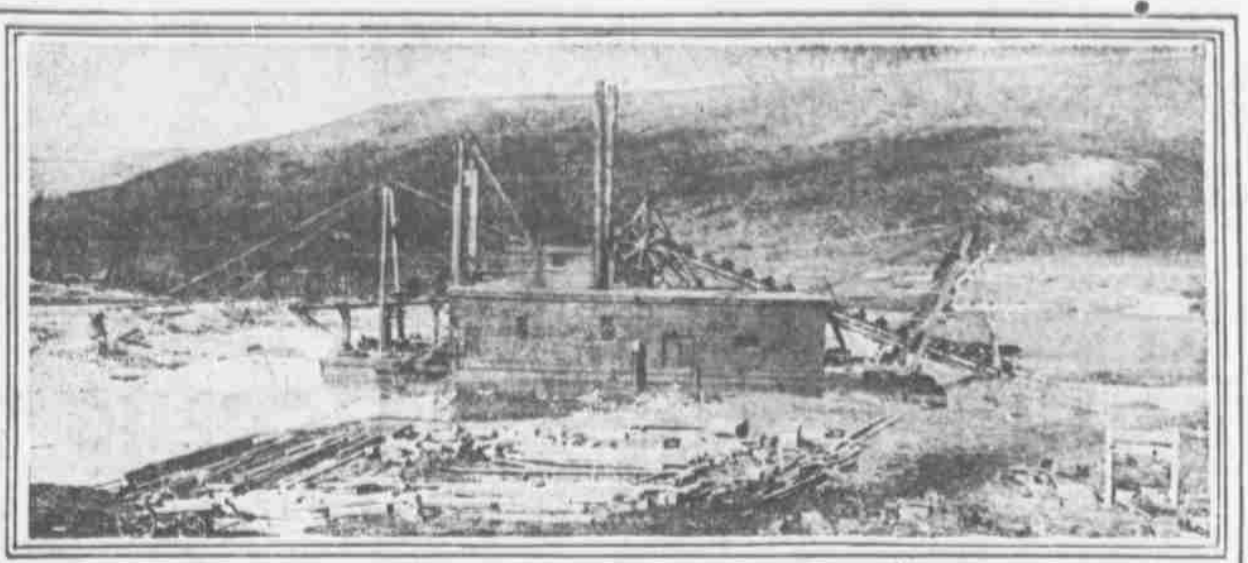
tion or suspicion on pioneer government mining grants. Sutphen suffered little competition and no rivalry.

There is but one dredge as yet in Terra del Fuego, but another, a \$30,000 structural steel monster, the largest of its kind ever made, is on the way, under charge and construction of Sutphen's right hand man, Captain Albert Burnside, formerly of the navy. This dredge has a minimum digging capacity of 200 cubic yards of gravel per hour to a depth of forty feet. The old dredge, running steadily night and day in eight hour shifts, sluices through 200 cubic yards of gravel per hour to a depth of twenty-five feet. Both machines are steel throughout.

Sutphen ran his dredge full blast all the while, and the news went travelling broadcast to the gold mining fraternity through-

out the world. Word came from prospectors that all was velvet—gold plentiful and more accessible, with wood, coal and water harder than elsewhere in the mining world, the Transvaal and Alaska not excepted. Naturally, upon the heels of such tidings every ship brought throngs of mining experts, engineers and capitalists, and Sandy Point resembles now the halcyon days of 'Frisco in '49. Its town—Punta Arenas—being a booming place owned and electric outfits and in telegraphic touch with the outer world. It is now the recognized center of the South American gold dredging area, and the magnet which has drawn to itself the many prospectors, speculators, dredging engineers and the innumerable others who ever follow in the wake of conquest.

Alaska and Fuego! America's polar



DREDGING A FUEGAN STREAM

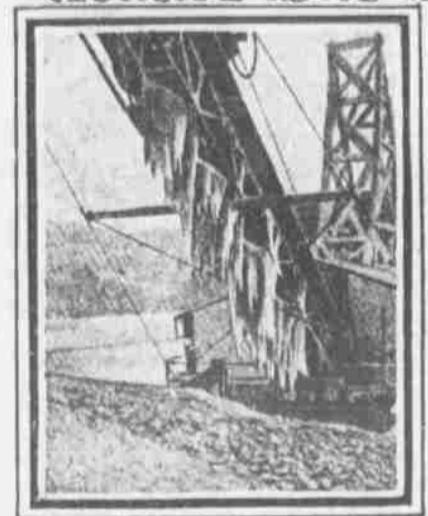


MR. E. W. SUTPHEN

PHOTO BY O. SARONOFF



SECTIONAL HOUSE FOR USE OF FOREMAN



DREDGE FROZEN OUT

gers, which with California give now a sunset vision of three golden graces crowning the continent with argent coronet.

Furthermore, the Argentine, across the strait, has been found to be surprisingly auriferous, and as a proof of the excitement going on down there no less than twenty local Chilean companies have been organized and financed to do serious business. In consequence the Chilean government, as far back as September, 1906, had been asked by Chilean companies alone for 12,000 claims covering over 60,000 hectares. Orders for the most powerful and best dredges have been placed. The names and the capital of the later companies are as follows:

| Name | Capital |
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| Rio del Oro | \$10,000 |
| Rio Verde | \$10,000 |
| Atalaya Chico | \$10,000 |
| Atalaya Grande | \$10,000 |
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