

A leap like this is almost as great as was accomplished in naval architecture in three thousand years, from the launching of the good ship "Argo"¹ to that of the "Comet."

¹ The Argo is described as a penteconter, propelled by 50 oars; she carried 50 heroes, as some authors say, or 100 according to others. The pseudo-Orpheus* sings, that after Jason had taken the golden fleece he passed up the Tanais, and the ship was transported by land to the head waters of a river which flowed into the Baltic. Hence she made her way through the German Ocean by Ireland to the Straits of Gibraltar, and up the Mediterranean to her port of departure. She must thus have been of light construction, and a tolerably good sea-boat. Others† tell us she returned by the Southern Ocean, which, to meet the exigencies of that version, flowed from the Red Sea across what is now the dry land of Northern Africa. Prose authors,‡ to whom of course the least credit is given, suggest as likely that she came back the way she went. Unravelling the meaning of traditions, respective events said to have happened about a generation before the siege of Troy, may amuse antiquarians and perplex historians, but is not very profitable to us. Still you may be detained for a moment, as one of the interpretations of the objects and results of this expedition goes to show the antiquity of one of the contrivances employed in gold-washing; and that it has been perpetuated by the like means and by artificial substitutes amongst various people, separated from each other by distances of time and space. We may suppose that the people of Colchis were in the habit of collecting the particles of fine gold washed down from the Caucasus by placing sheepskins in the stream, as is now done in South America, by using ox-hides for that purpose; or as it is done daily at every quartz claim here by placing baize or blankets on your shaking-tables or ripple-boxes, to the pile or filaments of which the laminated gold adheres. The strictness with which they preserved the secret, and the jealousy with which they protected their treasure, may account for the fable of the golden fleece guarded by dragons. Chrysomallus, the gigantic ram, engendered by the god Neptune and Theophane, daughter of Brisaltis, King of the Island of Cremla, may then be sobered down to a sagacious old gentleman who combined the operations of sheep-farmer and alluvial digger—who depastured his numerous flocks on the banks of the Phasis, between Trebizond and the Straits of Kertch; and turned his fleeces to a double purpose—subject, nevertheless, to the royalty imposed by King Aetes; that Jason, a buccaneering young Greek, invaded the country, and contrived to outwit the monarch, eased him of his two chief staples of export, wool and gold, eloping at the same time with his daughter, the fair enchantress Medea. Another instance of the similarity of the method of mining in ancient times and in modern days, when resort is had to simple means unaided by scientific appliances, is furnished by Monsieur Caillaud, the persevering mineralogist, who recently discovered the famous emerald mines of Mount Zeborah, in the isthmus which separates the Nile from the Red Sea; and confirms in all respects the testimony of Strabo and other writers. Worked during the dynasty of the Ptolemies more than 2000 years ago, excavations following the veins of mica, talc, and schist, were driven for many hundred yards into the granite mountain. Subterranean canals, huge causeways, and other massive structures, show on what an extensive scale, and on what rude and uninformed principles, the work was carried on. It would seem that the operations were suspended, and the miners withdrawn suddenly; from what cause is unknown (not improbably from a panic fear of ghins, ghouls, or evil geni entertained by the superstitious workmen), for ropes, baskets,

* Of this way of thinking are also Timæus and Szymmus of Chios.
† Pindar, Pythic Ode 4. ‡ Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus.

No attempt is made in this cursory retrospect to present to you anything not known to all of you. My desire is to suggest by this brief recapitulation an idea which arises out of it. Each of these sciences, with many others to which no allusion has been made, are the willing handmaidens of the art of mining. Knowledge of the suitable locality in which to sink your shafts, and of the direction in which to push your drives—how to support them with due regard to economy and safety in working them, to drainage, lighting, ventilation, and the precautions for the preservation of health and life, the expulsion of foreign substances which detract from the value of the ore and interfere with the direct action of your quicksilver on gold, or of the fluxes and reagents employed for refining other minerals, even the means of speedy carriage to the port of departure and transit to the ultimate market—concerns you all; and though it may not enter into the calculation of the gentlemen who with such eagerness ply their vocation in the sale of scrip at your "Corner," ignorance, or the misapplication of ill-digested science in the elaboration of any one of the stages of the lengthened series of operations, may make a sensible difference in the actual tangible amount of the dividend promised when you associate yourself with the latest "floated" company, professing to be conducted on the most approved scientific principles.

levers, grinding-stones, vases, lamps, tools, and utensils, in all respects like those in use by the Arabs of the present time, were found lying about as though the owners had retired five minutes before these implements were found.

The Latin version of the portion of the *Argonautica* of the pseudo Orpheus relating to this (*incert. auct.*), is given:—

Inde sub Arcto is angusto raptu meatu,
Finibus oceanum versus prolabitur Argo,
Defessi noctesque novem, totidem quoque soles
Linquimus hinc atque hinc ignotas nomine gentes,
* * * * *

Atque ubi diva diem jam clarum Aurora revexit
Rhiphæas valles attingimus, inde repente
Prosilii angusti puppis per littora ponti,
Oceanumque intrat, Saturnius ipse vocatur
Pontus Hyperboreis à gentibus, et mare mortuum,
Unde etiam lethum fugiendi nulla fuit spes,
Ni puppim validis Anceus viribus actam,
Innixus pulchra temonibus arte dolatis,
Dextra coëgisset cursum per littora ferre.
* * * * *

At multa Anceus temonem dirigit arte,
Insulaque ante omnes offertur Iernis, et Argò
Insequitur metuens atram non stulta procellam,
Velaque franguntur.