NEWS OF THE WEST.

Terrible Affair as the Result of an Explosion of Benzine.

DAMAGES AGAINST A RAILROAD.

An Aged Piute Indian Chief Visits California.—An Aristocratic Young Forger at Work.

At seven o'clock on Sunday morning, while a freight train was passing through a tunnel between Hamilton and Fossil, a crash occurred. About forty tons of debris has fallen, caused by dampness. All trains were delayed. No one injured.

Birdie Slayton has taken her life at Ashland, Or., by cutting her throat with a razor, at her room at the depot hotel. The suicide occurred in the presence of Jack Clark, a railroad engineer, whose mistress she is generally supposed to have been. The only reason assigned is that Clark asked her to wait until the next day for a small sum of money with which to pay her board bill.

The case of Mrs. H. M. Johnson, who sues the Southern Pacific company for $25,000 because of the death of her husband, who was killed at a defective engine and killed August 14, 1892, ended at Carson, Nevada, on Saturday. The jury, after being out about two hours, brought in a verdict for the widow for the full amount. The case has occupied over a week in the Circuit court. The defendant requested a stay of proceedings for thirty days, which was granted by Judge Hawley.

Chief Natches of the Piutes in Nevada, who is eighty years old, but whose mind is yet as clear as a bell, has been in San Francisco for a day or two in company with one or two other Indians of his tribe. A lot of old settlers and Indian fighters of the Sagebrush state have claims against Uncle Sam for houses burned and stock destroyed, as well as for supplies furnished United States troops in times past, and they got Chief Natches to come here to tell how the lands was lighted and the extent of the damage. Special Attorney Bell of Washington, D. C., has been listening to the stories told about the damages and endeavoring to get at all the facts, so as to pay the bills after this long period. The old chief, having finished his story, left for home yesterday. He attended one of the theaters while here and said it was almost as good as some of the experiences he had when some of his people were on the warpath. Natches's head is a tangled mass. He has never combed his hair, and it looks somewhat like the tuft of a Nevada bunch-of-the-full of burs.—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

John Sparks has a pet antelope at his place on the Truckee meadows, says the Reno (Nevada) *Gazette*. A few days ago the animal was running in the lane near the house, while Mr. Sparks's little four-year-old son was playing in the grove on the other side of the fence. Suddenly the antelope leaped over the fence and attacked the child, knocked him down and then commenced prodding him with his stub of horns. A brother of the little fellow, a few years older, rushed to the rescue, and with a stick of wood tried to drive the animal away, when the brute turned upon him, and but for the timely arrival of Mrs. Sparks and a stout Swedish domestic, the children would probably have been badly hurt. As it was it was with the greatest difficulty and after most obstinate resistance that the animal was forced to discontinue its attack upon the child. It is seldom that an antelope evinces a vicious disposition, and this was the first time that this one has manifested such aspirit. The animal in the future will be confined in a corral with a number of elk and oper which Mr. Sparks has on his place.

Several times during the past week the highbinders in Chinatown, San Francisco, says the Chronicle, have created disturbances, and on two occasions at least the timely arrival of the police has averted a street fight between the opposing factions. About 7 o'clock Sunday night about twenty drunken and quarrelsome natchetmen began a fight at the corner of Baker and Sullivan alleys, and when Sergeant Pope and posse arrived on the scene knives and pistols had been drawn and the Chinese not engaged in the row were flying in all directions to get out of gunshot. There were so many in the fight that arrests were out of the question for the time being, so the police lay about them with their clubs and after a short hickbarap scrimmage succeeded in dispersing the murderous highbinders. Seven of the fighters escaped into a house of ill repute in Sullivan alley, and here they were captured a few minutes later by a squad of police. Eight of the frail inmates of the house were also arrested and the whole lot marched to the police station under a strong guard. Half an hour later $900 in gold coin was put up for the release of the women. The men were charged with frequenting a house of ill fame and their bail fixed at $20 each, which was furnished.

On March 28 a dapper young man arrived in Beatrice, Nebraska, and registered at the best hotel in the city, styling himself as J. R. James of St. Paul. He claimed to represent a new book publishing house, and called on a leading law firm, saying that he desired to quit the road and study law. He was given a place in the office, and until May 8th everything went well. On that day he left the city quietly and without saying where he was going or when he would return. On Saturday two drafts for $237 and $200 respectively, drawn on St. Louis and Denver banks, were returned protested. On one was forged the name of a member of the law firm as indorser and on the other the forged signature of a business man, who had given James a letter to writer on a typewriter, was written. Nearly two weeks had elapsed between the time of James' departure and the discovery of the forgeries. He has probably made good his escape. It is thought however that the same party was in Kearney after leaving here. On Saturday three drafts bearing forged signatures turned up in Kearney. They aggregated $400 and had been issued in exactly the same manner as were the Beatrice forgeries. The maker ingratiated himself in the office of a law firm in the city in the same manner as in Beatrice. Chief Bruce of the Kearney police force has been in correspondence with the Beatrice officers and has secured a full description of the man.

About a year ago a great meteor fell at or near Table mountain, says the Oroville *Mercury*. The fall of the visitor from unknown spheres and the consternation it caused among those who were witnesses was told in a graphic manner to a reporter of this paper by Prescott George H. Hoag, superintendent of schools, and others of white interest. Searching parties were organized and some of the scientific gentlemen came here to get if possible a piece of the meteor. Mr. Hoag received letters from all over the United States and even from Europe. But despite strenuous efforts, no trace of the mysterious visitor could be found. The center day, however, Charles L. Bloomfield, who resides some miles to the west of where the meteor was supposed to have struck, discovered what at undoubtedly a fragment of the same. He was plowing his field when the implement turned up a mineral mass which Mr. Bloomfield immediately recognized as not being of the ordinary character. He brought the same to Oroville this morning and it is now on exhibition at Newton & Edson's drug store. The fragment weighs fifty pounds, is of a flint or blowpoint color on the surface, and for its size is remarkably heavy. Assayer Edson says that the mass is mostly composed of iron, although he has as yet made no regular assay. He says there is no doubt of its being of meteoric origin, and will at once test it and find what its component parts are. He will also send samples of the meteor to other scientists.

Edward Lowrie, who lives with his family at Oakland, Cal., had a very scientific experience with fire on Saturday last. He had determined to give some of his clothes a thorough cleaning and so he purchased a large bottle of benzine. The clothes were spread out in the room and Mr. Lowrie started to work. His wife was near at hand washing the and his little daughter was to bed at the side of the room. Lowrie used the benzine very freely, and so soon as he got a little soiled he threw it on the bed and took a new one. He had about completed his job when he noticed a sudden blaze in a corner. He commenced to smoke and went on with the cleaning process. A spark from the cigar fell on the clothes and in an instant the benzine ignited. Mr. Lowrie was enveloped in flames in a moment and he realized that it was the fire department. His wife came to his assistance, and in her efforts to put out the fire her clothes were caught in the blaze and soon she was enveloped in flames. The fire caught her hair and almost cremated it at once. The room was hot and saturated with benzine now caught on fire and the daughter was soon surrounded by flames. Her terrified parents rushed to her assistance, and threw the bedclothes over her head in order to protect the child's face. In doing this they exposed the child's hands and she was terribly burned. Lowrie, although terribly burned, with his clothes still on fire, fought the flames furiously in order to save his daughter. In the meantime the wife succeeded in saving herself by rolling on the fire in her dress, and then she ran to her husband's assistance, and together they fought the flames in the bed where their little daughter was suffering excruciating pain. Everything was done so quickly that the outside people hardly knew what had happened. Lowrie after a short but desperate fight conquered the flames. It was then found that both he and his wife were badly burned. The little daughter, however, was a sight. The skin peeled off her body and she was in great agony. A doctor was quickly summoned and dressed the wounds of the unfortunate trio.

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