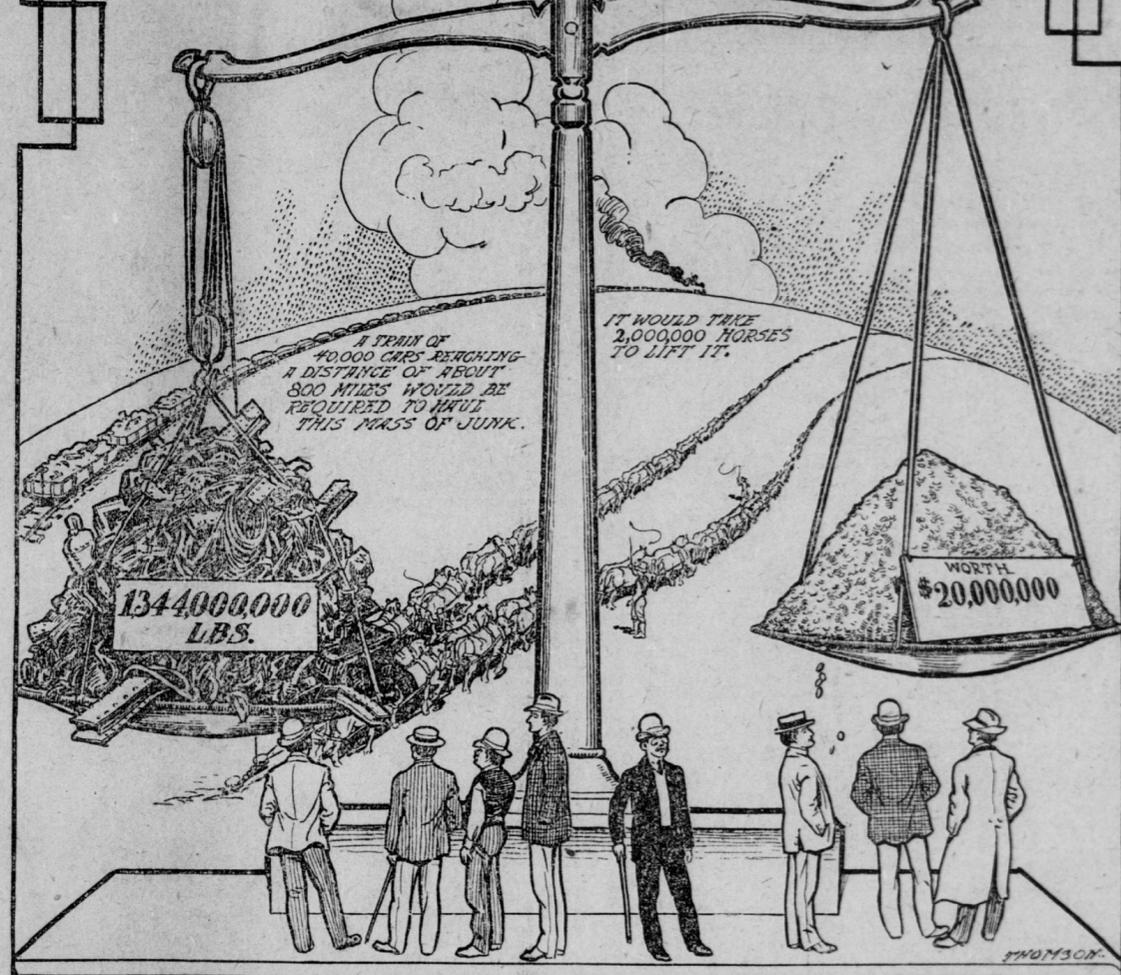


Wealth of Junk in City's Debris

by Barton W. Currie

It is estimated that there are 600,000 tons of junk, exclusive of the brick, lying in the debris in the devastated district of San Francisco. It consists mainly of copper, brass, iron and steel, which, when marketed, will net the junk dealers many millions of dollars. If this enormous amount of scrap metal were to be shipped to Hongkong, the great junk market of the world, it would require a fleet of between 100 and 200 great steamships. If transported in sailing vessels it would need a fleet of 1000 fine sailers and weigh them down until their gunwales were awash. If all this wealth of junk were sent East by rail, allowing an average of 39,000 pounds to the car, it could be carried by a train of 40,000 cars, and a train of 40,000 cars would stretch along the rails for about 800 miles.

Six hundred thousand tons are 1,344,000,000 pounds. Estimating that the average man can lift 100 pounds, it would take 13,440,000 men to lift the junk of San Francisco. One horsepower is 550 pounds per second, so that it would take more than 2,000,000 horses to move this mountain of junk for one second, though 600,000 horses could readily haul it.



One billion three hundred and forty-four million pounds of junk and one billion one hundred and twenty-five million bricks! In these imagination-staggering figures we are able to estimate the wealth of the debris the world's greatest calamity left in the fire flattened ruins of San Francisco. We have billions of pounds and billions of bricks, but when we gradually reduce these figures to a physical worth in dollars and cents we have only millions—not a few millions, however, but a score of millions of dollars.

The junk wealth of this city today is \$20,000,000 if we put brick in the category with the tangle of conglomerate matter with which it is involved in the general ruin. Undoubtedly we say with the junkmen of the world, "The richest opportunities in junk!"

At least that was the thought that ran round the world of junk while San Francisco was burning. Dealers in refuse metal throughout the United States did not wait for the blaze to expire. They swarmed to the coast while flames were still stabbing viciously amid the great waste of debris and a large force of them are still camping here, ready the moment the insurance companies raise their embargo to purchase the many million dollars' worth of scrap metal that is piled upon four square miles in uncounted heaps.

These junkmen have been estimating and approximating for six weeks the value of the junk of San Francisco, while builders and dealers in second-hand material have been figuring on the number of brick in the ruins and their worth, so that gradually a comprehensive estimate has been obtained on the value of the entire mass of ruin. This estimate, and it is generally considered conservative, is \$20,000,000. It was only by collecting a great mass of data from various big dealers in scrap metal that this figure was obtained, for it involves individual estimates of the junk contained in more than 17,000 lots on which buildings were destroyed.

It is safe to say that the world never suffered for so much junk, and at the present time San Francisco has more scrap of this sort within its devastated area than was dug from the

ruins of all the cities of the world that have suffered from great conflagrations. In giving an estimate of \$20,000,000 I am simply stating the value of the junk as it lies on the lot. The junk dealers who purchase this marketable debris will make a profit of about 20 per cent, or \$4,000,000, so making another estimate with this profit considered, the ruins of the city, exclusive of land value, are worth about \$24,000,000.

In gathering my facts on junk I consulted with architects, engineers, contractors, scrap metal dealers, electrical manufacturers, second-hand material dealers and others, whose combined knowledge on the subject enabled me to reach final and comprehensive estimates. I began with an estimate of the value of all the acres of brick in the burned area.

It required some tall figuring. Before getting down to these figures I think it pertinent to call the attention of the people of this city to the fact that there were more bricks in the walls of San Francisco than in any other city of its size in the world. The reason for this was that it has long been a custom here to construct brick buildings with individual side walls. I mean by this that party walls were rarely used, though it has been a custom to build with them in all of the large cities of the country for many decades. A party wall saves about twenty inches front footage to every building, so that many thousands feet of valuable land has been wasted in San Francisco by the use of individual walls. Where land is worth \$5000 to \$10,000 a front foot such a waste of space means a small fortune in every building of any size. It is being pointed out now that party walls would not only have been just as serviceable but advantageous to the owners structurally as well as in saving area. When an individual wall is standing and another building is erected to adjoin it both work generally results. As the standing wall will hide what is stepped alongside of it, any old sort of brick and mortar will serve the purpose. At least that is the principle that has evidently been followed. Judging from an inspection of the ruined walls, the familiar idea when we set forward a building with a frontage of about forty feet and a depth of ninety feet contains about 75,000 bricks. Of course,

there were hundreds of brick buildings with a greater area and height than this. But there were also many hundreds of smaller ones. Therefore it is possible to strike an average of a five-story building in considering the combined brick area of 15,000 structures destroyed. There are 600,000 bricks by 15,000 we have a total of 1,125,000,000 bricks that are either standing in dismantled walls or have fallen in heaps of ruin.

Of this vast number of bricks, however, only about 25 per cent are usable. That gives us about 281,250,000.

Now, though there is no actual market for these bricks at the present time they have a physical value of at least \$3 a thousand. The owner of the lot cannot get \$2 a thousand for them, but they are actually worth that to San Francisco. Dealers in second-hand building materials are merely offering to cart away the brick, saving the owners of the lots the expense that would otherwise be incurred in removing the debris. The cost of carting is about \$2 a thousand, and it costs at the very least \$1 a thousand to clean them, or it will cost that when the builders and material dealers begin to clean them in great quantity, as they will do when the big construction operations get under way.

Having established this value, we find that the 281,250,000 bricks are worth \$843,750 at the present time. Under ordinary circumstances second-hand brick is worth about \$5 a thousand, but it will not have any such use in San Francisco for many years to come.

Though there is a far greater volume of brick, it can hardly be considered a specific category of junk. Generally speaking, junk is supposed to include a conglomerate of all sorts of material. Dealers in scrap metal have been exploring the ruins for weeks. They have made estimates lot by lot on all the 460 burned blocks of the city. Though it would be impossible to figure the value of the material, the estimate of the tonnage of all the cast iron and steel that is being purchased merely as junk is 400,000 tons.

This includes steel girders, beams, cast iron and steel columns, sheet metal, joints, spikes, rivets, window sash weights, angle irons, gusset plates and all the great tangle of scrap that can be seen in a journey of many miles through the burned area. The cast iron is bringing from \$8 to \$10 a ton when it is merely scrap and can only be used for reforging into steel. No matter how it has been broken up and cracked it is always good for this purpose. It costs about \$2 a ton to haul it, so its physical worth to the city in its present state of ruin is all of \$10 a ton.

The cast steel, in the shape of bent and twisted girders, is worth only as much as the scrap iron, but there are thousands of tons of steel that have not been greatly damaged by the fire. This is worth more than scrap iron. The steel that was melted or subjected to intense heat lost its temper and fitness and can only be used again in the manufacture of inferior grades of material. This sort of junk is bringing about \$4 a ton on the average, or costing about \$2 a ton to cart, giving it a present value to the city of \$6 a ton.

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The steel that was not badly damaged in the fire and the columns and girders that were not bent and twisted in dynamite were not bent and twisted in dynamite. They are in value from \$10 to \$20 a ton, so that in the aggregate all of the steel is worth about \$10 a ton. This will bring the average value of the entire steel that was melted or subjected to about \$10 a ton, or \$4,000,000.

Therefore, the brick and base metals that will be reclaimed from the ruins are worth \$12,437,500, and they make about \$8 per cent of the bulk of all the ruin. But there are other metals of far greater value, though of much less bulk. These metals are copper, brass and lead, and there is about \$3,000,000 worth of it being gathered together and sold to the insurance companies make their adjustments on the lots in the burned area.

Copper has lost very little in value from the fire. It is selling on the market in bars at the present time at 14 cents a pound, and it is being bought in San Francisco as junk at 14 cents a pound. The junk dealer can either

sell it into bars again and sell it at its market value or turn it over to a smelter. The smelters purchase it by the ton and pay 16 cents a pound. Fully a score of dealers in scrap copper and brass came to San Francisco from the East immediately after the fire. A few are still here waiting for the insurance companies to allow the lots to be cleared of junk, but the majority returned East disgruntled at the delinquency caused by the methods of the insurance companies.

The greater part of the copper junk consists of electric wires and electrical appliances and fixtures. In some of the big buildings that were gutted by the flames there are five and ten miles of copper wire, most of it of small size. As the insulation was burned off of this wire and much of it was melted or otherwise injured, it can only be sold for its weight in copper at the junk rate of 14 cents a pound. It will, if used again for wire, have to be melted down and redrawn.

The same is true of other kinds of copper fixtures, used in plumbing or for ornamental purposes. Brass is about half as valuable as copper, the yellow brass selling for 8 cents a pound and the red for 10 cents. There are a good many hundred tons of this brass in plumbing material, gas fixtures, gas pipes, door knobs and some varieties of electrical fixtures.

Little of it has been recovered from the ruins, except on the few lots in the business district that have been cleared. Scores of temporary buildings have been erected over uncleared lots and will remain there for a year at least. Therefore the junk dealer will be purchasing scrap copper and brass for several years to come. They are purchasing this junk in advance, however, making prices on the uncleaned junk. The profit that will be made from this junk, however, will be greater probably than from any other scrap metal, as it will be sold in small lots to dealers as souvenirs.

The twisted and melted barrels will be sold all over the United States to souvenir hunters for anything the dealers can get for them. On the little stands and booths about San Francisco they have been selling for \$1 and \$2 each to the purchaser in the first instance, and they are sold for as high as \$5 each. This means enormous profit for both the purchaser in the first instance, who bought the whole lot by the ton, and the hundred, between five and ten tons of these fire ruined weapons have been shipped out of San Francisco up to date and the demand for them is increasing.

arrival in the city. These European dealers rarely do business with the owners of the lots, but make some sort of a bid to the big local junk dealers, who can handle the scrap and store it until a ship is found to carry it abroad. There are dozens of dealers who make specialties of particular lines of junk. There is one concern in San Francisco that has bought up about all the window sash weights on the four square miles of the burned area. So far 600 tons of sash weights have been taken from the ruins. When new these sash weights are worth \$21 a ton. They were bought as junk for \$10 a ton, but as they are for all material purposes as good as new they will be sold again at the usual market price.

In order to make a profit of 50 per cent on these window sash weights it has only been necessary for the purchaser to get them out of the debris and sort them into various sizes. They have lost no weight and the temper of the metal is of no moment, nor does it matter that they have been scorched and blackened in the fire. They will never be seen after they are once dropped into the window sash. It is estimated that there are 5000 tons of sash weights still buried under the debris of \$50,000 worth. They include all sorts of repeating arms as junk, paying \$4.75 a ton for it. These weapons were destroyed in burning of the Winchester Company's warehouses on First street, near Mission. They include all sorts of repeating arms, from small rifles to repeating shotguns. Many of the rifles and guns were worth \$75 and \$100 each before the flames burned off their stocks, ruined the locks and drew the temper from the barrels.

The loss on these arms is great, for they were worth between \$400 and \$5000 a ton and now only bring \$10 a ton. The profit that will be made from this junk, however, will be greater probably than from any other scrap metal, as it will be sold in small lots to dealers as souvenirs. The twisted and melted barrels will be sold all over the United States to souvenir hunters for anything the dealers can get for them. On the little stands and booths about San Francisco they have been selling for \$1 and \$2 each to the purchaser in the first instance, and they are sold for as high as \$5 each. This means enormous profit for both the purchaser in the first instance, who bought the whole lot by the ton, and the hundred, between five and ten tons of these fire ruined weapons have been shipped out of San Francisco up to date and the demand for them is increasing.

There is one kind of scrap metal in the ruins, especially in the residence lots, that there is no market for. These are bed springs, and there are a great many tons of them. Not only is it here, in a region of enchantment, but you can't give them away. They will not even allow their drivers to throw them in with other junk, as they are bulky and tangly. They are included in the same category of worthless metals with wire and iron nails. They are made of cheap wire and cannot be melted up with any other sort of scrap. Having accounted for \$15,000,000 worth of junk we come to the scrap metal that is really not scrap metal.

These dealers have had years of experience in purchasing this sort of material. They or their representatives are on hand at almost every fire, and are even more expert than fire insurance adjusters in reaching an estimate on the value of the junk in a destroyed or fire-gutted structure. Whenever there is a big conflagration they race to the stricken city to get in their bids. Many of them are representatives of great iron and steel manufacturers, who buy millions of dollars' worth of scrap metal every year. There are junk dealers in San Francisco now who have come from different countries in Europe; several from Japan and China. One London junk man got an option of \$100,000 worth of scrap iron two days after his

This is machinery, both steam and electrical, that was badly damaged by the flames, but not sufficiently injured to put it in the class with junk that is sold by the ton. There are dealers who make a specialty of this sort of damaged machinery. They are employed by big concerns that buy many million dollars' worth of machinery that are sold out of fire-swept buildings. These concerns have forges where they make over these engines and boilers and motors, selling them again for practically what they cost when new.

Of course there are a great many machinery manufacturers with warehouses in San Francisco who recover their own machinery and send it back to the forges and workshops to be repaired. Then there is much of this machinery that can be repaired in forges near at hand. Gangs of mechanics have been brought on to San Francisco to do this work. Hundreds of pumps that passed through the fire have been repaired and are again in working order. Hundreds and even thousands of electrical motors are being repaired in shops all over the city and in Oakland.

In the case of armatures and field coils that were burned out they are being rewound and used again in the lighting of temporary buildings. Down in the machinery district neighboring about Howard and Main streets the estimate is given that about \$4,000,000 worth of machinery of various sorts either has been or will be rescued from the ruins. Some of the motors in the

power plants that were burned down have been very little damaged and are worth about \$5,000 each. The copper alone in some of these big electric engines is worth a fortune. Adding the tonnage of the copper and brass junk (taking into consideration the vast amount of cast iron and steel in the electrical machinery) to the tonnage of the cast iron and steel already figured in as junk a conservative estimate of the scrap metal contained in the devastated area of the city is 600,000 tons.

If this stupendous weight of metal were all to be shipped to Hongkong, the great junk market of the world, it would require a fleet of between 100 and 200 great steamships. If transported in sailing vessels San Francisco's junk would load a fleet of 1000 the sailers and weigh them down until their gunwales were awash. If all this wealth of junk were sent East by rail, allowing an average of 30,000 pounds to a car, it could be carried by a train of 40,000 cars, and a train of 40,000 cars would stretch along the rails for about 800 miles.

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Proverbs the World Over

The wit and wisdom of proverbs are clad in different garb in different countries, but they are all very much the same. Identical ideas arising independently in widely separated nations are not necessarily expressed in interchangeable terms. They usually derive a certain quaintness from the manners and customs of the people who use them.

Thus the old Greek proverb, "The miter's eye shows the horse's fat," has many different renderings. The Italians express it with local color, "The garden fat from the master's house," the gumbos spools. Again, the familiar idea when we set forward a building with a frontage of about forty feet and a depth of ninety feet contains about 75,000 bricks. Of course,

there were hundreds of brick buildings with a greater area and height than this. But there were also many hundreds of smaller ones. Therefore it is possible to strike an average of a five-story building in considering the combined brick area of 15,000 structures destroyed. There are 600,000 bricks by 15,000 we have a total of 1,125,000,000 bricks that are either standing in dismantled walls or have fallen in heaps of ruin.

Of this vast number of bricks, however, only about 25 per cent are usable. That gives us about 281,250,000. Now, though there is no actual market for these bricks at the present time they have a physical value of at least \$3 a thousand. The owner of the lot cannot get \$2 a thousand for them, but they are actually worth that to San Francisco. Dealers in second-hand building materials are merely offering to cart away the brick, saving the owners of the lots the expense that would otherwise be incurred in removing the debris. The cost of carting is about \$2 a thousand, and it costs at the very least \$1 a thousand to clean them, or it will cost that when the builders and material dealers begin to clean them in great quantity, as they will do when the big construction operations get under way.

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KEY TO JOHN BROWN'S PRISON

Curious things are coming to light every day. Among many interesting relics of the civil war is a huge iron key more than a foot long, which turned in the lock and made old John Brown a prisoner in Charlestown jail at the time of his great raid in Virginia and call for his negro to rise and fight for freedom. This key is now in the hands of Dr. Alfred B. Tucker of New York, and it played a vital part in the history of the war leading up to the great war. When General McClellan marched through Charlestown after the battle of Antietam his troops burned the historical jail, whence John Brown went to the gallows. Later, when the ashes cooled and boys began poking about the ruins, the quaint key was found almost unharmed, the fire having only twisted the handle a little, which was easily restored to its proper shape. In this connection it may be interesting to state a few facts about John Brown that are not generally known. After his career in Kansas, where he received the name "Ossawatimie

Brown," the old revolutionist, with a fervor amounting to what he considered religion, resolved to begin work in a practical way for freeing the slaves. He went about his task deliberately and with quiet preparation. To the negroes he was known as "Captain Brown." He began his campaign by setting in Charlestown, Va., now the West Virginia, and not far from Harper's Ferry. He opened a shop, over which hung the sign, "J. Brown, Watchmaker." Here he ostensibly pursued his calling like other business men of the place, only he spent his spare time in visiting the various negro quarters of the town and neighborhood, urging them to organize and strike for freedom. It seemed a hopeless task, not only absurd, but it was against the laws of the country. From Brown's standpoint, however, both he and his friends considered the movement a complete success, for it roused the country, brought on controversy, followed by the election of Abraham Lincoln, the seceding of the Southern States and finally the greatest

civil war ever known, with the emancipation of four millions of slaves. Charlestown is situated on the main road, the grand highway running from Harper's Ferry down the valley of the Shenandoah to Winchester and other points in that glorious valley. A more beautiful part of the country is not to be found. The soil is extraordinarily fertile, the climate like that of Italy, the landscapes as rolling and wooded as the finest parts of England, while lovely blue mountains stretch away on either side of the valley. The people are most hospitable, and it is here, in a region of enchantment almost, that the old Washington mansions were erected, and for years were the scenes of festivities and peaceful, happy life. Here the best families of Europe, and even members of royalty, came on their visits to the Colonies before the revolution. So when old John Brown of Ossawatimie selected that particular spot for beginning his so-called revolution in behalf of the slaves he succeeded better than his most sanguine followers could have imagined possible.

As a Circus Man Sees Us

"Do you know that the red skinned, wild and untutored Indian beated the city circus goer all to pieces for loyalty and enthusiasm?" remarked a veteran canvasser. "He will put up with all kinds of hardships to get the price, and travel or walk for days to reach the place. Every circus man knows that the negro would sell the roof over his head to get money to see the elephant, but the Indian will barter his papoose, his squaw, or even his most cherished possession—his horse—to get a ticket."

"After the negro comes the Chinaman. The showy things about the circus hit the yellow skinned laundryman right where he lives. He will look up all his relatives, line them up in a single file and then march out to the show lots as happy as a kid on Christmas morning. The Mexican, too, is a warm baby when he hears the toot of the calliope. The laziest Greaser on the Texas border who never paid a bet in his life will show up on circus day with 50 cents in his hand, though nobody knows where he got it. But the Indian is the greatest fiend of them all."

"In some places, like Missoula, Mont., fully one-half of the circus audience is made up of Indians. They come from as far as 200 miles on horseback, and even on foot, starting on their long journey days before the circus date and arriving promptly on the morning of the day of exhibition. On circus days it is a case of every man for himself with the Indians. The lord of the tope brings enough trinkets to peddle around town, and in this way he gets enough money for his own admission ticket. The squaw brings little baskets and has to hustle for her own ticket. They generally come in couples astride a pony, and if the market is overcrowded with Indian relics, they will sell the nag."

"After the show is over the chiefs proceed to fill their skins with the white man's fire water, and the squaws with the papoose wait on the lumber piles or sand heaps until the gray streaks begin to spread over the hills, and then the unsteady stream winds out of town over the trail homeward. The Indians buy the best seats, too. You will find most of them on the reserved side, and they buy these extra priced places even for the youngsters. "Along the Pacific Coast the Chinamen make the circus coming an event. They turn out of their holes, decked in their best bib and tucker and quit business as if it had no interest for them. In some towns in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama the big tent looks as though it were in mourning. Here and there a white face looms up. "The clowns are their favorites. Strange to say, too, in view of the bad name she negro has for forgetting the ownership of things he likes, he never tries to ring in any of his family on the 'under 12' clause. If his children are a day or even three days ahead, he is mum, and it is often no small drain on his finances, for he sometimes heads a procession of youngsters the length of a city lot. "The Mormons are great circus goers. Entire families will travel for 100 and 200 miles to see the circus in their country. They come in wagons over mountain and valley, and camp out until the show comes. Sometimes they are a day or even three days ahead. The hill cabins are empty, so are the mining boarding houses. "When a show goes through the Quebec Province the factories close down. They might as well. The English women clad in costly silks, attend the menagerie until the last call, and show the most satisfaction when the dancing features of the spectacle of the vaudeville part of the programme are on. "The Prim New England takes to the circus like a duck to a millpond. The Harvard boys like the girl bareback riders and the trapeze artists. They get along well with the clowns, too, provided the clown has good average sense and falls in with them without delaying the show. Of course, the Harvard crimson is worn by the girls without too much display. "In Middle Pennsylvania, where money looks like gold and is kept as long as life, the circus does really good work. It gets these pious, close-fisted people away from the hard line of daily routine, and sends their blood racing to parts of their systems that had been numb for moons."