

THE WAR ON COPPER.

When I solemnly agreed with the News to furnish some information relating to the status of things in and about the section of country known as "Rocky Mining District" in Beaver County, it was not entirely without a realization of what such a task amounted to, for behold! I have "been there" a great many times. To those who hang around mining districts and are looking for profit therefrom directly or indirectly, the advent of an item-seeker representing a newspaper is as good as a circus in one respect—it affords them a great deal of fun to see how eagerly the "tenderfoot" nibbles at all their statements, probable, improbable and impossible, but all as highly seasoned with idealisms and colored with fanciful language as the ability of the perpetrator will permit. It is also unlike a circus in that the bohemian takes away nothing but his voluminous notes—none of them negotiable except to the paper he represents, and not always there—and leaves the greater part of whatever quantity of lucre he may have been possessed when he made his grand entree. I remember with vivid distinctness the first article that ever escaped from my pencil to the columns of a newspaper regarding a mining situation. It often causes a sad, but not altogether forlorn condition of mind, the thought of how snugly and completely I was taken in and done for giving place at once to one in which the said paper in turn figures as the victim. The fact that it was no better posted and as susceptible to Munchausenisms as the writer, was a comforting influence whose elements were not altogether malice and that misery which hankers after company, but which yielded a small return in the way of a moral.

I was well equipped on this occasion, and it was well for all concerned that it was so. Sometimes, when the mood is present and the paper represented willing, fancy's magical pinions are spread wide and no especial notice is taken of her flight. Now, let me say, the disposition is wanting and the News unwilling to receive anything but facts as they exist and logical deductions therefrom. A long, albeit desultory, experience among the delvers and their parasites, embracing actual observations in and around the excavations and other features of mining communities, have had their effect upon the undersigned, and he is no longer the food for sharks he was in the days long ago. Everything heard in such places is now discounted till it reaches its proper proportions, and everything seen is beheld with the eyes of a disbeliever willing to be convinced, not with those of an enthusiast who enjoys being inflated as much as the "founders" do the inflating. The best results properly come through maturity; it is the work done on the homestretch that counts.

Milford, some 215 miles south and a little west of Salt Lake City, is

practically the terminus of the Utah Central Railway, though a supplemental line connects to Frisco, sixteen miles west. Regular trains are run on this division, going up in the morning shortly after the arrival of the northern passenger and returning a little before the other departs in the evening. The engine pushes the train going up, as a measure of safety and convenience combined; it must always be on the down end to prevent the possibility of a car becoming detached and returning to the level at a rate of speed which I can liken to nothing at present but the flight of an arrow.

The road between Milford and Frisco describes a horseshoe, the grade even with this great detour, which adds fifty per cent. to the distance between the two points, being so great that a car left to itself and starting from Frisco, as has been done two or three times, spins over the sixteen-mile course in just twelve minutes.

Milford is almost deserted. But for the presence of the railway, it would present a forlorn appearance. The expectations entertained of the place when the road first reached it—that it would be a modified Cheyenne—have long since vanished into thin air; indeed, all the boom it ever had was the prestige imparted by the enterprise and capital of the Utah Central Company, and this, with all its aid and influence, could not evangelize a naked, barren plain into a bounding metropolis. The road now carries the entire situation, and with the revival of operations in the Rocky and other districts adjoining, it is easy to understand that Milford will again materialize and surpass its former self, giving those who own property thereabout something of a return for their outlay and richly repaying the railroad company for its liberality and persistence at the same time. The greater part of the traffic now comes from and goes to Beaver and the southern country generally, Frisco of course contributing a heavy proportion.

The "Old Hickory" mine, the first discovery in Rocky district and a kind of nucleus around which have grown locations until the face of nature is plastered over with them so thickly that for miles around they are confluent, is the most noted of any mine in this region by reason of its being the first discovery and a great producer. It is said to be entirely or partly owned by Frenchmen who figured largely in the recent extensive and continued bearing operations in copper which were incubated by the *Societe des Metaux* and engineered by the *Comptoir d'Escompte* (not *Comptoir des Comptes*, as most of the western papers persist in putting it) of Paris. It is situated five miles due northwest of here, near the summit of an eminence arising abruptly from the south side of the roadway to a height of about 300 feet. The main shaft is eighty feet down and on the surface enough gaudy-looking green, blue and red rock is piled up to load several trains. This carries gold, silver,

iron and copper, the last predominating, though all are well represented. Some of it has gone up to 60 per cent. copper, 150 ounces silver and \$20 gold. With copper at 25 cents a pound, which is where its commercial and intrinsic value entitles it to be, even in times of depression like the present, that metal alone would make the ore worth about \$300 per ton, or altogether, rating silver at a dollar an ounce, \$470. Such ore could even now be shipped at a clear profit of \$250 per ton, but of course it is not all so good as that, nor nearly so, but from a thorough exploration of the field, from numerous samples collected and from a thoroughly distributive and analytical series of assays, I am prepared to state without fear of being overcome that the ores of the district will average fully one-fourth of the figure and approximate closely to the respective proportions stated, thus ranking in the high-grade division of ores. Not only at the Hickory, but all around and in every direction are heaps of this ore, speaking as eloquently as muteness can of the vast wealth secreted in the recesses of nature and awaiting only the labor and enterprise of man to be brought into the light of day and made useful in our time and generation. The whole country is filled with it. Wherever I went, and I covered several square miles of this great "copper belt," at almost every place where a pick was struck in it produced mineral of some description. There would seem to be enough to build a large city with all the houses composed of copper. And why is it all lying there, with the exception of a comparatively insignificant quantity, in exactly the shape and form which the gorges took on in the days when the huge convulsions of our common parent caused the "heavens to shrink upward with tumultuous dread?" The "why" as well as the "wherefore" is what I have been drifting on toward since I seated myself on a candle box at a dirty old shelf for a table, to trace these lines.

That the French financiers are the ablest of that class of men alive is a statement needing no argument. The history of the world since man began to know that certain of the metals had intrinsic value and could thus be made a ready means of effecting exchanges, is authority on that point, even if so much were needed. But their skill and their regard for upright conduct in aiming at given conclusions are not always parallel conditions. First employ all means to win by fair methods; failing in these, all means to win, is the text in brief, and the plutocratic Gaul lives up to it religiously. Recently it was discovered that the copper product of the world, so far from falling off or even remaining stationary, was actually increasing. This discovery naturally created that feeling of confidence in the situation which caused the world at large to be unwary and altogether at ease so far as the ruddy metal was concerned.

Once unsuspecting, naturally