

This episode caused a trifling commotion among the more enlightened people of the camp, but it proved a one-day wonder only, and soon vanished from the memory of man.

The hallucination that certain men and women could cause misfortune to pursue one, by a simple word or glance, became so deeply imbued in the minds of the ignorant masses of Brandy City, that no few worthy people were placed in trying and uncomfortable positions by reason of this silly belief. When a stranger visited the camp, on business or otherwise, he was closely watched, to ascertain whether he was possessed of the "evil eye." This state of affairs suggested the days of witchcraft, rather than the declining years of the nineteenth century—the age of reason, progression and enlightenment.

One who had been as thoroughly inoculated with the "copper" theory as any of the disciples of this disgraceful superstition, was a superannuated Yankee tavern-keeper, Joe Jones by name. Had his belief in the doctrine ever been shaken, the subjoined circumstance would have strengthened it for all time:

On the southwestern edge of the camp, lived one Michael Bauer and his son, a seventeen-year-old lad, both engaged in cutting wood, as a means of obtaining a livelihood. The father and son bore pronounced facial traces of gypsy origin, and were no pleasant objects for the fastidious eye to gaze upon. They had long been suspected of being "coppers," but as they visited the camp at rare intervals, only, they escaped molestation. One day, Jones, in driving a cow home, passed Bauer's cabin. Just as the animal reached the latter spot, *perce* Bauer stepped out of the door, and, simultaneously with that, the cow fell down in a fit. Jones, being cognizant of Bauer's reputation, began swearing at the unsuspecting old man in a blood-curdling

manner, and accused him of "coppering" his cow. Bauer, being peaceably disposed, and wishing to avoid trouble, paid no heed to the maledictions heaped upon him, and returned to the interior of his cabin. The door had scarcely closed when the cow arose, seemingly in as good health as ever. That was enough for Jones; he was now convinced, in a measure admitting no degree of doubt, that the Bauers, father and son, were exercising an evil influence over the camp. That night, the episode was related to three scores of the disciples of the "copper" doctrine, and it was resolved that the Bauers must leave that vicinity forthwith, though no immediate violent measures were then adopted. In the meanwhile, the few friends of the old man informed him that a movement was on foot to expatriate him and his son; and while assuring him of the moral support of the intelligent element of the small community, yet he was cautioned to be prepared for any unpleasant emergency.

The Bauers were strangers to fear, and dating from the hour of the threat to drive them from their humble home, they appeared in the heart of Brandy City with more frequency than in the past. They were subjected to great annoyances, however. When they came in close proximity to the followers of Wilson and Jones, the latter would ignite Chinese fire-crackers; or, if these were not within convenient reach, the fanatics would snatch revolvers from their belts (a weapon carried by almost every one at that period of California's history), and discharge them into space, so as to exorcise the ill-luck, which a close proximity to "coppers" was supposed to attach to others. It was also observed, that after Jones' cow had that fit, no equestrian would remain in his saddle when necessitated to pass the Bauers' cabin. When within several