

LIFE AS A COPPER MINER

PRENTICE MULFORD DESCRIBES THE EXCITEMENT OF 1862.

A Fiercely Raging Fever—Search for a Lead—Sudden Development of Mineralogic and Geologic Wonders—Time, Labor, Health and Life Sunk in the Shafts.

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In 1862-3 a copper fever raged in California. A rich vein had been found in Stanislaus county. A "city" sprang up around it and was called Copperopolis.

The city came and went inside of ten years. When first I visited Copperopolis it contained 3,000 people. When I last saw the place 100 would cover its entire population.

But the copper fever raged in the beginning. Gold was temporarily thrown in the shade. Miners became speedily learned in surface copper indications.

The talk far and wide was of copper "carbonates," "oxides," "sulphurets," "gossion." Great was the demand for scientific works on copper. From many a miner's cabin was heard the clink of mortar and pestle pounding copper rock preparatory to testing it.

The fever flew from one remote camp to another. A green verdigris stain on the rocks would set the neighborhood copper crazy. On the strength of that one "surface indication" claims would be staked out for miles, companies formed, shafts in flinty rock sunk and cities planned.

They told all about it, where the leads should commence, in what direction they should run, how they should "dip," what would be the character of the ore, and what it would yield.

Old S—, the local geologist of Sonora, who had that peculiar universal genius for tinkering at anything and everything from a broken wheelbarrow to a clock, and whose shop was a museum of stones, bones and minerals collected from the vicinity, "classified" and named, some correctly and some possibly otherwise, took immediately on himself the mantle of a copper prophet, and saw the whole land resting on a basis of rich copper ore.

And they did sink. For several years they sunk shafts all over our county, and in many another county. In remote gulches and canyons they sunk and blasted and lived on pork and beans week in and week out, and remained all day underground till the darkness bleached their faces.

of which I was to make them shareholders in whatever I might find. Then I went forth into the chapparal to "prospect."

On the eastern slope you may see from the old Sonora stage road two parallel lines, perhaps 200 feet apart, running along the mountain side. Mile after mile do these marks run, as level and exact as if laid there by the surveyor.

A geological supposition. That's what water seems to have done outside of Table mountain. Were I a geologist I should say that here had been a lake—maybe a great lake—which at some other time had suddenly from the first mark been drained down to the level of the second, and from that had been drained off altogether.

I said to myself, "This Halsey lead, like all the leads of this section, runs northeast and southwest." (N. B.—Three years afterward we found there were no leads at all in that section.)

This view always reminded me of the place where one very great and very bad historical personage of the past as well as the present showed another still greater and much better being all the kingdoms of the earth.

I aimed my compass down the other side of the mountain. There, when the perpendicular lava rock stopped pitching straight up and down, sometimes fifty, sometimes two hundred feet, was a dense growth of chaparral—the kind of chaparral we called "chemical."

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Quite a popular fad nowadays is a taste for live alligators. They are taken in the rivers of Florida by negroes when very young, placed in boxes and sent through the postoffice to friends in the north, and often emerge to find themselves in some very fashionable houses in New York.

"No person to be buried in this churchyard except those being in this parish; and those who wish to be buried are desired to apply to the parish clerk," was a notice given by an English parish clerk.



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COPPERHEAD CITY.

FOUNDED AND LAID OUT IN CALIFORNIA BY PRENTICE MULFORD.

The Majority of the Citizens Were, However, Skunks and Snakes, Not Men. Rapid Rise and Fall of the Stock—The Death of the Boom.

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TRUDGED back nine miles to Sonora, my pockets full of "specimens" from the newly discovered claim, my head a cyclone of copper hued air castles. I saw the "boys." I was mysterious. I beckoned them to retired spots. I showed them the ore. I told them of the find. They were wild with excitement.

My company was made up chiefly of lawyers, doctors, politicians and editors. They never realized how much they were indebted to me.

Feeling certain that the Copperhead was a very rich claim, and that other rich claims would be developed from the "extensions," and that a bustling town would be the result, I pre-empted a section of the land which I deemed most valuable, on which it was intended that "Copperhead City" should be built.

There is a sepulchral and post mortem suggestion in the term "laid out" which is peculiarly applicable to all the "cities" which I attempted to found, and which

"cities" invariably foundered. Actually, also, at that time, by those business principles so largely prevalent in most Christian communities, I "claimed" the only spring of good drinking water in the neighborhood of my "city."

But one house was ever erected in Copperhead City proper, and that had but one room. But three men ever lived in it. Yet the city was thickly populated.

The "city"—I mean the house—was located within a few feet of the spring. Retiring thither at noon for dinner, I have started half a dozen snakes from the porches and suburbs of that spring.

The evening gloaming seems the favorite time for the skunk to go abroad. He or she loves the twilight. There must be a vein of sentiment in these far smelling creatures.

will know that it is far safer to remain in the skunk's rear than to get ahead of him, because when he attacks with his favorite aromatic means of offensive defence he projects himself forward (as it were). I have, then, in my city, had a skunk keep the trail about fifty feet ahead of me, at a pace which indicated little alarm at my presence, and, do my best, I could not frighten the animal, nor could I get ahead of him or her.

The skunk is really a pretty creature. Its tail droops over its back, like the

plumes of the Knight of Navarre. "It is an object which can really be admired visually at a distance. Do not be allured by him to too near approach. 'Beware! he's fooling thee!'"

At last it dawned upon the collective mind of the Copperhead company that their superintendent, the Enthusiast, was digging too much and getting down too little. They accepted his resignation.

The Enthusiast's rich mines lay principally in his head, but his belief in them gave him as much pleasure as if they really existed. It was like marrying, sometimes. The long sought for, longed for, wished for wife or husband turns out, as a reality, a very different being from what he or she was deemed while in process of being longed and sought for.

So the shaft was sunk, as they said, properly and scientifically, by the new superintendent. The rock got harder as we went down, the ore less, the vein narrower, the quantity of water greater, the progress slower, the weekly expenses first doubled and then trebled, the stock became less coveted, and as to reputed value, reached that fatal dead level which really means that it is on its downward descent.

The Copperhead claim and Copperhead city subsided quietly. The shareholders became tired of mining for coin to pay assessments out of their own pockets. They came at last to doubt the ever glowing, hopeful assertion of the Enthusiast that from indications he knew the "ore was forming." The inevitable came. Copperhead city was deserted by its human inhabitants.

PRÉNTICE MULFORD.

How Tea Is Carried to Tibet. The packages of tea, each about four feet long, six inches broad and three to four thick, and weighing from seventeen to twenty-three pounds, are placed horizontally one above the other, the upper ones projecting so as to come over the porter's head.

In their hands the porters carry a short crutch, which they place under the load when they wish to rest without removing it from their backs. The average load is nine packages, or from 190 to 200 pounds, but I passed a number of men carrying seventeen, and one had twenty-one. A man, I was told, had a few years ago brought an iron safe weighing 400 pounds for Mr. Biet from Ya-chou to Ta-chien-lu in twenty-two days.

The price paid for the work is twenty-two cents (about twenty-five cents) a package, and it takes about seventeen days to make the trip from Ya-chou. So far as my knowledge goes, there are no porters in any other part of the world who carry such weights as these Ya-chou tea coolies; and, strange as it may appear, they are not very muscular, and over half of them are confirmed opium smokers.—Lieutenant Rockhill in Century.

Holland Dykes Along the Allegheny. It is too late now to talk of street grades raised above high water level in Pittsburgh and Allegheny. It is hardly worth while to talk about a system of reservoirs to collect and hold the water which pours down the hill and mountain side to the Allegheny and Monongahela.

Count up, however roughly, the losses in various forms due to this flood and the total would go far beyond the expense of a dyke or any similar means to confine high waters to the natural course of the river. It should be remembered that the floods will be increased in volume in proportion as the watershed is denuded of forest. These losses will not cease with lapses of time.—Pittsburg Times.

Reconciling Old Enemies. There may not be much in a name, but an item gatherer of the Palatka (Fla.) Herald found some fun in two names the other day, and went away reflecting on the beautiful impartialities of peace.

An old colored woman stood at the station waiting for the Jacksonville train. Beside her stood two little pickaninnies with faces as black as the inside of a stovepipe. When the old mammy's train arrived she exclaimed, "Bress do Lor!" and then, looking down at her children, remarked, "Here, you Abraham Lincoln, take hold of Jeff Davis' hand, and come along head, quick!"

After the namesakes of the two great statesmen of the war joined hands and walked away, as though the names had not expressed such a dissimilarity of purpose.



How to Raise the Body of a Drowned Person. A French-Canadian proceeded in fashion: He supplied himself with glass gallon jars and a quantity of slacked lime and went in a boat to a place where the man was sunk down. One of the jars was half filled with lime and then filled with water and tightly corked. It was then placed overboard, and soon after exploded the bottom of the river with a loud report. After the third trial, each in a different place, the body rose to surface.

How to Remove Mildew from Cloth. Put a teaspoonful of chloride of lime into a quart of water, strain it and dip the mildewed places in solution. Lay in the sun to dry. The mildew has not disappeared.

How to Obtain a Letter of Credit. Any first class bank will issue a letter of credit upon the receipt of the amount of the credit and a small commission. This letter enables you to draw any amount up to the amount of the credit from the bank's correspondents almost anywhere. The amount of the credit is printed upon the back of the letter.

How to Make a Welsh Rarebit. The following is the old English recipe: Melt a tablespoonful of good butter in a saucepan and add about half a pound of rich crumbly cheese cut in half inch cubes. Stir the mass over the fire, and when the cheese melts pour in a gill of milk. When thoroughly mixed add a pinch of cayenne pepper. Lay slices of toast moistened with boiled milk on a platter, pour the melted cheese over them, and serve hot.

How to Tell Steel from Iron. Aquafortis applied to the surface of steel produces a black spot; on iron metal remains clean. The slightest of iron or steel can be readily detected by this method.

How to Degrease That Iron Nail. Two pieces of ice can be quickly melted in a room cooled below the freezing point by rubbing them against each other.

How to Estimate What a Horse Can Do. A horse can draw on metal rails and two-thirds as much as on an ordinary road. Three and one-third times as much as on good Belgian blocks, seven times as much as on ordinary cobble stones, thirteen times as much as on ordinary cobble stones, twenty times as much as on earth road, and forty times as much as on sand.

How to Transplant Large Shrubs. In the autumn, before the frost sets in, dig a trench around the tree to be moved, but not too near the roots. In the winter when the ground is frozen, raise the tree with the best earth adhering to the roots. The mass is easily raised with levers or strong sled, when it can be drawn by horses or oxen. Trees moved this way will grow in the spring.

How to Cleanse the Mouth. There are few things more offensive than foul breath. This occurs in many forms from decayed teeth, from mucus adhering to the walls of the mouth and throat, which has been composed by the gases and acids of the system. A simple and effective remedy is to drop a few crystals of permanganate of potash into a tumbler of water, and gargle the throat and the mouth well with it after each meal or before going to bed and in the morning. This solution is a perfect odorizer of all organic decay, and neutralizes the offensive odor arising from the decaying particles of food which remain in the cavities of or between the teeth, etc. It is harmless.

How to Clean Marble. A strong preparation for cleaning marble is fine pumice stone, newly washed and free of lime, mixed with soft soap. Dip a woollen rag in the compound, and rub the stains out. Then wash off with soap and water. Other excellent preparation is made of two parts of common soda, one part of fine pumice stone and one of finely powdered chalk, which should be sifted through a fine sieve and mixed with water. Used in the same manner. Iron can be usually removed by rubbing with lemon juice.

How to Render Fabrics Incombustible. Many deaths would be prevented if ladies engaged in household work wore incombustible or non-inflammable gowns. The process of so treating the goods in a 7 per cent. solution of plate of ammonia, or a 20 per cent. solution of tungstate of soda and then wash them. If they are now held in the hand of a candle or gas lamp they will not burn. That portion of the fabric which was in contact with the light will come charred, but it will not catch fire and hence the burning state will spread to the rest of the garment. Being in borax and hot water will have similar effect.

How to Restore Faded Writing. Often the writing upon letters or other documents becomes faded and almost illegible. If they are of paper the writing can be easily restored by first covering it with a solution of potassium permanganate, and then adding the potassium permanganate, some diluted sulphuric acid. By this means the faded ink will assume a permanent and dark blue color.