

**BOUGHT THE BRICK.**

**Banker Paid \$13,600 for \$6.80  
Worth of Copper.**

An Associated press dispatch dated at Hastings, Nebraska, June 13, says that William Kerr, president of the Adams County Bank, of Hastings, has received word from the Denver mint that a "gold" brick he had purchased from a stranger at Leavenworth, Kan., a few days ago, for \$13,600, is made of copper. The brick was transferred to Mr. Kerr by a man who represented himself to be an old mining partner in California of Albert Kerr, a cousin of the bank president. Mr. Kerr on June 1, accompanied the stranger to Leavenworth where the brick, held by an Indian companion of the "miner" was drilled. The sample, which Kerr had assayed in Kansas City, was found to run \$20 to the ounce. Mr. Kerr returned to Leavenworth, drew on his bank for \$13,600, and became possessed of the brick which he sent to the First National bank at Denver.

The Denver end of the story is thus told by the Republican of that city: It is the old story of the rich banker, the affable stranger, the gold brick and the mythical bonanza mine in Mexico, in which the stranger is willing to let the banker gain a controlling interest on such flattering terms that the rich old banker can not resist. Of course, there is the lost cousin of the banker, whose partner the stranger had been, and the silent Indian through whom the mine was discovered. But the gold brick is the subject of immediate chief interest. It will be disposed of at a small cost, because the present possessors of it are in need of cash, and are unsophisticated prospectors who do not know the regular ways of disposing of such valuables as the fruits of their toils in the mines. Then there is the buried treasure, guarded by the ignorant but faithful Indian. This is a sketch of the latest and one of the boldest gold brick swindlers of late years, which was unearthed in Denver.

The brick is now in the United States mint in this city. It is about three feet long, three inches thick and nearly four inches wide. It is pure copper, unsullied except for poorly applied coating of what is commonly called gold paint. It has a cash value of \$6.80, and cost the Nebraska banker \$13,600. The brick reached Denver last Saturday, consigned to the First National bank, to which Mr. Kerr sent it to have its value tested.

Mr. Kerr has had the brick in his possession nearly two weeks. It was on Decoration day that a stranger approached the banker with his story of a fabulously rich mine which he had discovered in Mexico. The stranger represented that he was an old time partner of Albert Kerr, a cousin of the banker, whose absence for several years had made any word from him, through whatever source, more than welcome to the banker. Only a few days before a letter had been received, purporting to be from the long absent cousin, containing the cheering information that the cousin would soon return to Hastings. All this the stranger seemed to know, and he talked feeling of the long years that he and Albert had spent together, in the mountains of Colorado and California, finally drifting in to Old Mexico, where they became separated. Then the stranger had found the old Indian, who directed him to a wonderful rich mine. The stranger came to Hastings for the purpose of finding his old partner and sharing the good luck with him.

But the ways of the civilized world had become strange to him. For months now

his only partner had been the Indian. Together they had smuggled a large brick of the precious metal, which was abundant in the mine, across the Mexican border. Half of it was for the old time partner, Albert, and the other half he would share with his Indian friend. But he was ignorant of the mining laws, and he was anxious to interest some one who would look after their interests in the mine.

Mr. Kerr was struck with the apparent sincerity of the stranger, and the story the banker thought plausible. When he had heard him through and signified a willingness, if the representations were proved, to open negotiations for purchase of a share of the mine, the miner let the banker into the secret, that the gold brick was hid in the woods near Leavenworth, Kan., and that the Indian was there watching it.

In the evening the banker told his family that he had been suddenly called away on business, and accompanied the stranger to Leavenworth.

Arriving there the next day, May 31, they waited until midnight, when the stranger conducted Mr. Kerr beyond the limits of the city and into the woods. At the entrance to a cave they were met by the Indian, who at the command of the white man produced from the depths of the cave the gold brick. Mr. Kerr had provided himself with a gimlet, with which he drilled into the brick, gathering up the dust and carrying it away. This he took to Kansas City and had assayed. The result showed a true gold value of \$20 an ounce.

At that rate the brick was worth something more than \$18,000, and the simple prospector had asked but \$13,600 for it. Mr. Kerr at once drew on his bank for the sale price and returned to Leavenworth. Another midnight visit was made to the cave and the exchange was made, Mr. Kerr receiving the brick and the stranger pocketing his check.

The miner promised to call at the banker's home and transfer him a third interest in the rich mine, but failed to show up, and this aroused the financier's suspicion. The brick was sent to Denver and the fraud was so palpable that it needed but a cursory glance by practiced assayers to discover it. The weight, too, was a clear exposure of the fraud, for so large a block of gold would be nearly as heavy again as this lump of copper. An assay showed the suspicions of the mint officials and employees were correct. It was pure copper, with but a very poor attempt to conceal its true metal.

**Proposed Mining Congress.**

General Passenger Agent Hulbert, of the O. R. & N. has written a letter to the Baker City Chamber of Commerce, in which he says:

"It seems to be the consensus of opinion on the part of the Baker county mine owners that no effort should be made to secure a meeting of the mining interests until some time in August. This strikes me as a little late, but those familiar with the conditions seem to think that it is the proper time. I have nothing from the Chamber of Commerce for some time, and assume they did not care to take any action at the present time. It was the company's idea that some effort should be put forth on the part of the people of Baker and Sumpter, in order to make the occasion one of more than ordinary interest, but if we find that we are unable to secure any assistance in that direction, we will undoubtedly name low rates for an excursion at a later date, and I will favor making two different dates, one from Portland, up to and including Pendleton, and a little later, one from Spokane up to and including all points north of Pendleton; the later to take in points from the line of the Spokane Falls & Northern and if possible will secure excursion rates from points on the Oregon Short Line, including Salt Lake and Butte."

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