The Sumpter Miner

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It seems to be the general desire among the knockers in these parts that the other fellow throw his hammer in the scrap heap.

It is a law of nature that men, as well as water, finally reach their level; however high they may appear to be soaring for a time.

Reliable reports state that coast mills have in stock over two hundred million feet of lumber, for which there is little demand, domestic or foreign—hence the depression in that quarter.

It looks very much as if Gorman's opposition to the Panama treaty is inspired by his hope that the transcontinental railroads will come to his aid in his presidential aspirations.

They, however, have little influence in a democratic convention, and there is where Gorman will have the fight of his life, to secure the nomination.

Another wild cat region has been exposed. During the last six months, the Wichita mountains have been boomed as a gold-bearing country. Government Assayer Bain, who made an examination of the country under the direction of the Interior department, reports that none of the assays showed ore in the proper sense of the word and that the region has no present or prospective value as a mineral producer.

The strained relations between Japan and Russia are almost wrought up to the shooting point, and war between the two nations is imminent. An indication of this is that Lloyd's rates for war risks on vessels bound for the far East have been raised. Japan is firm in her resolve to prevent the Russian acquisition of any Korean seaport, and desires a definite settlement of far Eastern conditions, while Russia, for obvious reasons, would keep them unsettled.

Every man engaged in practical mining knows that the way men spend their time and money, too, when off duty has much to do with their efficiency and a great deal with the general sentiment of the employes toward an enterprise, thinks the Pacific Coast Miner. With these self-evident facts ever present in mining districts, it would seem that the mine owners and the mine managers would have a special reason to give consideration to the social welfare of the men employed. There are everal American instances of the adoption of such a far-sighted policy, but too often the opposite is the case. In many instances the company stores make it a point to sell all the intoxicating liquors they can to their employes.

The Express-Gazette, of Cincinnati, shows in its January issue a marked decrease in train and stage robberies during 1903 as compared with 1902. It gives the following summary with the record for the past fourteeen years: The total number of trains held up in fourteeen years was 341; the total number of people killed ninety nine, and the number of people injured (shot), 109. The number of trains held up in 1903 was thirteen, as compared with twenty-two in 1902. The number of stage robberies in 1903 was six. Last year's record shows that no passengers nor trainmen were killed by robbers, but there were six wounded. In 1902 one was killed and three wounded. One robber was killed in 1903 as compared with three killed in 1902.

The Mining and Scientific Press thinks that the copper market shows signs of weakness, the anticipated rise in price not having materialized. The output for the year has been large, and the consumption has practically been equal to it; but still the market has slowly declined, and it is now at 12 1-2 to 13 cents, with indications for a still lower price. The disturbed industrial condition of the country and lack of confidence on the part of investors is responsible to a great extent for the present condition of the copper market. Numerous anticipated electric installations and extensions have not been made, because of uncerainty of labor conditions, and copper has not been in as great demand as was expected a few months ago. And this emphasizes the advantage of a gold camp, eastern Oregon, for instance. No market thimbleriggers can depress the price or shut off the demand for our product.

One of the problems to which engineering schools ought to give immediate and serious consideration has grown out of the practice of obtaining professors by "in-breeding," as it has been characterized, meaning by this the recruiting of the young teachers, soon to be developed into full-fledged professors, from among recent graduates, with little more than their school experience to their credit. This species of selection has become an increasing fashion within the past ten years, says Cassier's Magazine, or, perhaps, better put, in an increasing necessity, due to the cramped financial conditions ruling with most of the schools, and the result has undoubtedly been a narrowed degree of usefulness of instructors and professors, and a more closely circumscribed value in the engineering market of the young graduates forced into in. In a few instances, it is true, prominent engineers actively engaged in professional work, have been induced to lecture occasionally at such schools, thus vitalizing the college atmosphere with the spirit of actual engineering, and through such lectures some good has been accomplished. In several recent instances, also, men fresh from engineering fields have been secured as the heads of engineering school departments, and as such afford admirable illustrations of a policy which is to be much commended. But these are only isolated examples of what should be generally practiced.

Andrew Carnegie does not believe in stock speculation and is out in a letter denouncing the whole business as gambling of the worst sort. It may be like the devil quoting Scripture, but Andy has made some wholesome observations nevertheless. He says:

"Buying shares upon a margin, called 'speculation,' is, in its essence, gambling. It is immoral because the aim is to get something for nothing. Speculation is the parasite of business, feeding upon values, creating none. It carries its own punishment. If the gambler wins, his winnings are ill gotten gain; if he lose, he probably robs his family and dependents. To those who are reported to have lost in gambling, I express the opinion that it is better that they have lost than won, provided they resolve to gamble no more. To those who have won I would say say, wealth so obtained can bring no blessing. The spirit of speculation throughout the cities of our land is the saddest of recent developments. I hope our good old city of Pittsburg will recover its former reputation as a solid, conservative, honest, hard-working community. Our manufacturers should return to the making of iron, steel, glass, coke, mining of coal, etc., and give up the making of or dealing in paper certificates."

In a mining way, the year just ending has been one of unexpected prosperity in the Sumpter district. Never in the history of mining operations here have a twelve months witnessed so many and such vast improvements and developments. In the matter of gold production it is next to impossible to obtain reliable statistics, for the reason that operators in this particular are reticent to an unreasonble degree, but mill construction and development work have shown for themselves. While it is believed that the gold production for the year will more than average with former years, any attempt at statistics, however, would be the merest guess work, for the the reasons stated. The news columns of The Miner have contained a faithful account of the mill building and development record of the district for the past twelve months, and without any attempt at a resume here, the statement will readily be credited by those familiar with the situation. And if all indications do not fail, the coming year will be vastly prosperous. A great many companies are now planning to put in new plants, new properties will be opened up, and development energy will be redoubled, while the old producers will go steadily ahead adding to their output and equipment, as they have done durng the past year.

Under the caption, "Tightening the Screws," the Grant's Pass Mining Journal tells of the handicap that section of the state labors under, in this wise:

We do not forget that we are a long way from "civilization" and its markets. We acknowledge that what we have and are is largely due to the agency of various railroad lines, and are duly grateful. But even our gratitude does not blind us to the fact that the short sightedness and "penny wise" avariciousness of the Oregon lines and eastern connections is bound to prove a positive detriment to the commonwealth and to southern Oregon in particular.

The policy of the Southern Pacific in regard to its mineral lands in this part of the state is a blow at the industrial development of this section, and a blow that will rebound upon the railroads itself, for it is a self-evident fact that whatever tends to restrict development of territory is detrimental to the railroad system. In past years the Southern Pacific has been fairly liberal towards the locator, who was able to secure lands at the rate of $2.50 per acre. Now, in addition to advancing the price to $5 an acre, the company attaches a "string" to every tract of land sold to settlers, in the form of a clause in its deeds, according to which the locator is debarred from developing any of the mineral resources of the land which he has purchased; and furthermore gives to the railroads the privilege of entering upon said lands at any time for the purpose of prospecting or developing the said resources.

It must be a courageous settler who will enter on railroad land in this section with such a condition attached to it.

Speaking of Roosevelt's chances of nomination, the New York Commercial finds no precedent; in fact, that none of the vice-presidents who have accidentally become president was ever nominated to succeed himself. It says:

"Several newspapers are pointing to the fact that none of the vice-presidents of the United States who have hitherto become president by accident—Tyler, Fillmore, Johnson and Arthur—has been nominated to succeed himself as president; and the precedent is cited as ominous of the fate that maybe in store for President Roosevelt.

"One very important point, however, is overlooked by these newspapers: Unlike Roosevelt, neither Tyler, Fillmore, Johnson nor Arthur was nominateud for vice-president in order to "get rid of him." Roosevelt was nominated for that office much from the same motive that members of the British House of Commons are sometimes "kicked upstairs" by the bestowal of a peerage—the vice presidency would be a place of dignified retirement for him.

"He was not nominated primarily to balance his party ticket geographically, but to shelve effectually what some of the party leaders had come to regard as a troublesome personal factor. His nomination was not a peace offering extended to a stormy and dangerous faction as was that of Arthur; neither was he a "dark horse" like Fillmore. He was a popular figure both in and out of his party just then, and it was believed that his nomination for second place on the presidential ticket would serve to strengthen the latter and at the same time dispose forever of his presidential ambitions.

"None of the four vice-presidents already mentioned was nominated under such circumstances—a fact that makes Roosevelt's case stand out by itself. For all of that, lots of things may happen in the course of the next half-dozen moons."

Work at Cracker Highland.

Dan Cahill, superintendent of the Cracker-Highland, came in from the property last night, and reports good work on the vein, showing satisfactory ore bodies carrying good values. He left this afternoon on a business trip to Baker City.

Timber and Homestead Filings.

Timber and homestead filings, as well as final proofs, can be made before Charles H. Chance, United States Commissioner, office in First National Ban of Sumpter building, Sumpter, thus saving applicants expense of a trip to La Grande.