

OH, THE JOYFUL ITALIAN CLIMATE

Abas, the early spring! shouts the miners of this camp.

More snow! wails the ranchers of the lower valleys.

Linger, linger, oh winter, in the lap of spring! incantates the merchants and business men of Sumpter, who know on which side their cornmeal bread is buttered.

"Rotten roads!" grumble the teamsters between gnashing of teeth.

"There won't be enough snow water this year to make a whiskey chaser," wails the placer miners from Sparta to Canyon, "and our giants will lay idle and our sluice boxes be empty."

"Unless more snow falls in the hills, our alfalfa crops will be fizzes," is the melancholy plaint of the valley farmers, "and our spuds will be baked in the ground and our green peas be as yellow as the New York World."

"Now is the time to swim the pup, 'cause the pond ain't frozen up," chortles the timely "pote."

Never—since Mount Baldy was a hole in the ground, since the immortal Hee was a canine infant, since the morning stars sang their symphonic lullaby to a natal world—has there been such a winter as this one of 1904-5. "Winter" is a misnomer. It has been a perpetual May-day—a continuous vaudeville with April fions and lambs, and June bugs, and summer sunshine spirits and fairies, and humid moonlight troles and gnomes and dwarfs, as chief performers in the atmospheric and meteorological comedy. Of course, there has been snow, and freezes, and sudden sun-zero stunts of the thermometer, and Arctic mornings, when to hop out of bed and kindle a fire, clothed in the diamphonious drapery of a single-piece robe de nuit, with the mercury flirting outrageously with the bulb at the end of the tube, has been provocative of language—spelled with a capital "L." Likewise, there have been bursted water pipes, and empty coal bins and vacant woodsheds. Such things are inevitable in a town which nestles between the shoulders of the Blue range of mountains, towering 3,000 feet above the clam beaches of the Pacific, and located at the ultimate extremity of a funnel-like valley which gathers all the wintry winds within reach and shunts them in one chilly blast through the little end of the funnel. Long will live the memory of that cold soap in the early part of this month, which started from the other side of the Arctic circle, whistled for a clear track, opened the throttle to the limit, overlooked all way stations, and landed in the Blue Mountains with a whoop and roar that fairly froze the sap in all the pine trees. Baldy lake froze solid, it is said, and split a wide crack in the Grant county divide, like a water pitcher cracks on a cold night.

On the other hand, future historians will record the story written on the obverse side of the coin. Memory will ever retain a record of balmy, sunshiny days; of clear blue

skies—as beautifully blue as ever bent an azure arch over a sunny Neopolitan bay; of a sanguine sun, blazing its rose-dawn way over the eastern peaks, sailing majestically athwart a cloudless sky, and burning an orange and pink and rose and blood-red path down the western end of the world, leaving a calm night and a memory of a glowing, warm, peaceful, wonderful day.

Not soon will it be forgotten that on the 23rd day of February, in the year 1905 of our sweet contempt for less favored climes, school boys played marbles in the glad sunshine, robins sang their matin lays, meadow larks, full-throated, bathed the air in wonderfully sweet melody in welcome to spring, while over all an Italian sky, and a flower-land sun hung like gentle spirits, lost in a voyage from some faraway Pacific isle, where soft-lapping waves are liquid sunshine, and where spicyscented sea-winds waft fragrance from the dream-like world beneath the Southern Cross.

All of which is very nice, of course; but it don't buy anything—that it, it's too much like a temperance sermon at a brewers' picnic, or an Orangeman in a St. Patrick's Day parade. What the materialistic mining man and teamsters and valley farmers and merchants with goods to sell and deliver to mountain camps want—and want pretty bad—is snow, and plenty of it. They don't want roads hub-deep with mud just yet awhile; nor do they find anything at all pleasing in the prospect of a snow-water shortage this summer for placer mining and irrigation. Of course, some of the valley farmers are natural-born poets, and can go out in the cowardly these days and bathe in the mellow sunshine, and listen to melodious carolling of the dicky bird on the worm fence, singing in a spasm of spring-fever ecstasy and scratching its neck for very joy. But the pleasurable emotions felt at first by such a poet-farmer will soon give place to scowls, as he pictures dry irrigation ditches, sick-looking cabbage patches, et cetera, et cetera, et.

But the out-and-out poet, who possesses no placer mine, nor potato patch, nor ore-hauling contract, sings yo-ho for the glad springtime, and the fine Italian climate, and the cerulean sky, and such.

What a pity that such sickeningly material things as irrigating ditches and hydraulic giants and mucky roads should intervene in a full appreciation of a short winter and a beautifully early spring.

Chinese Miners in British Columbia.

It has been found impossible to successfully work hydraulic mines in many portions of British Columbia at the prices paid for white labor, and in consequence an effort is to be made again next season to introduce Chinese labor in the hydraulic mines at Atlin, in the northern section of that province. A few years ago a number of Japanese were taken into the district for this purpose, but in consequence of the determined opposition

of the local miners' unions the mine owners were compelled to abandon their intention in the matter. Since the conditions have considerably changed, there being far fewer white miners in the district than formerly, while it has been clearly shown that it is not possible to profitably operate many of the Atlin hydraulic properties without largely reducing the cost of labor. Under these circumstances, reports Consul Smith at Victoria, B. C., it is probable that there will be less opposition to the contemplated employment of Chinese labor, particularly as it is proposed to increase the wages of white miners now in the district, who will be employed as foremen or overseers.

Opp Mine a Big Producer.

Reports come from the Opp mine that the new 10-stamp mill lately erected and put in operation at that mine is turning out the gold at a rate that is extremely satisfactory to the owners. With a force of twenty men an average of thirty-five tons of ore is milled per day and the gold produced is close up to \$200 a day. On a recent cleanup after a 15 day's run, \$1600 was taken from the plates and concentrates were saved that would yield \$1500 and no clean-up of the mortars was made, which always hold considerable gold.

This mine, which is located 30 miles from Grant's Pass and a mile and a half from Jacksonville, is owned by J. W. Opp, Dr. J. F. Reddy and F. T. Perry, who have a close corporation known as the Opp Mining company. No stock of this company is for sale and none was sold to install the mill, the capital being supplied by these gentlemen. The building was erected for 20 stamps and the other 10 stamps are to be put in at a later day, but the owners prefer to wait until such time as they can meet the expense without involving themselves too heavily, for they plan to have the mill pay its way and not have a big lot of stock out with the owners clamoring for dividends before the mine is in perfect working order.—Rogue River Courier.

New Mineral Worth \$1.50 a Pound.

A new mineral, valued at \$150 per hundred weight, has been discovered in Ceylon. The fact is recorded in the report on the results of the mineral survey in the island, just issued, which states that a sample which was supposed to be uraninite, or pitchblende, proves, on complete analysis, to be a new mineral, which it is proposed to name "thorianite." Its principal constituent is oxide of thorium, of which it contains 76.22 per cent, an amount far higher than that of any mineral known hitherto. Thoria, which is used in the manufacture of incandescent gas mantles, is scarce, and is at present chiefly extracted from the monazite sands of Brazil. "Thorianite," adds the report, is also a radiative, and a footnote to the report states, on the authority of Sir William Ramsay, that radium is present in the mineral, and that it furnished considerable quantities of helium.

Pumps for the I. X. L.

Manager Fred T. Kelly, of the I. X. L. mine, in the Greenhorns, announces that he will leave for Chicago in a few days to purchase a new pumping plant, to handle the heavy flow of water at this mine. Pending the installation of the new pumps, work has been suspended.

STANDARD OIL A STANDING MENAGE

About twenty years ago in a congressional investigation the methods of the Standard Oil company, then in its vigorous infancy, were laid bare. The rapid rise to power and affluence of an obscure corporation; the mysterious failure of established refiners, and how men who had been wealthy and who had given employment to many operatives found their trade leaving them without knowing how or why; the unaccountable prosperity of this new company; its offers to buy out its rivals, rejected at first and then reduced offers accepted—all these things were disclosed.

Other refiners had complained of the railroads of discriminations, but the answer to these complaints was to show the books and prove that the freight rates were the same. Then came the final exposure of the secret rebates, which the company had obtained by various methods, and which had enabled the Standard to ruin its rivals and take possession of the oil trade of the United States. All these things were described in a series of articles written for the Sun at the time by the late William L. Wilson.

When we consider the enormous power and wealth of this corporation we are forced to believe that even the United States, the most powerful country in the world, is at a disadvantage in a contest with it. The company controls the production, the manufacture and distribution of about two-thirds of the output of American petroleum and its products. It can crush out any rival in any business with the utmost ease. It fixes its own prices and its own terms when it buys or sells. It can employ the ablest members of the American bar to attend to its law business; if there are venal legislatures or venal congressmen it has money to buy them; it can forerailroads to do its bidding.

After spending millions in the extension of its business, building pipe lines and acquiring oil fields for the future, it distributes from \$40,000,000 to \$45,000,000 a year to its shareholders. The shares are held by a few millionaires, who are directors in the company, and their dividends enable them to acquire by purchase of stock for investment the control of banks, of trust companies, of railroads, of every agency of power which the dreams of avarice may suggest. And these millions so invested annually in various enterprises yield other millions, and thus a vast amount of the wealth of the country is going into the hands of a few men, and with this wealth a proportion of power and influence which it is not wholesome to the body politic that a few men should wield.—Baltimore Sun.

Ore Exhibit in Racket Store.

Tom Gray and Joe Reed today closed a deal for the building on Mill street, formerly occupied by the Racket store, in which to install the permanent ore exhibit. Mrs. Hickok is the agent for the property and signed a lease for two years, with the privilege of extending it for another year. Carpenters are now at work in the building getting it ready for the ore.