

Admitting this theory, it will be easily understood that the metal would be very unequally distributed throughout the crystalline mass that imprisons it, which it is in fact. It is therefore only with large quantities that an average produce can be determined. Then one says, such a mine contains two, three, ten, thirty dollars to the ton ; but an isolated specimen signifies absolutely nothing. On submitting to analysis a block of quartz, in which may be seen a little nugget, and then estimating from the quantity found, the yield of the mine, the inexperienced calculator would arrive at an extravagant figure and be woefully deceived if he paid for it at this rate.

The mode of treating the mineral is most simple ; the blocks of quartz, previously reduced to stones of an average size, are thrown by hand or mechanically into an iron trough in which is rising and falling a stamp, also of iron, and weighing seven or eight hundred pounds. Five of these stamps are generally set up in a trough constituting a crushing machine.

A constant stream of water arriving there in a regulated quantity, transforms the quartz into a liquid mud, which runs through a metallic gauze, covering grooves in the bottom of the trough, and issues in a very thin sheet of liquid over a copper table, slightly inclined, the surface of which is rendered slimy by the presence of mercury, poured into the trough in the proportion of three or four spoonfuls a day. The gold coming into contact with the mercury is transformed into an amalgam

that adheres to the copper table, and this, swept morning and evening with a leathern brush, yields a yellowish slimy product, which is an amalgam of gold. It only now remains to submit this residue to a high temperature in order to separate the gold from the mercury, and find again the two metals rendered perfectly pure by the volatilization of the second.

It is already ten o'clock when we come up covered with mud from the only gallery that is to make the fortune of the Weber family. We shake hands with the proprietors, who, through their economy and industry, seem to us to distinguish themselves signally from their neighbours, and we go to remount our horses which we have left on the other side of the river. We are expected at Galena, and we are still six miles from there. The country is everywhere lovely. The mountains luckily are so precipitous on this side, that the woodcutters of Deadwood have hitherto left the trees alone. We pass by some pines which, measured at a yard from the ground, show a circumference of from  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet to 8 feet. At every step there are traces of prospectors : a shaft sunk on the summit of a rock with its abandoned windlass half decayed ; a tunnel fallen in, opening its dark mouth on the side of a mountain, and beside it the remains of a miserable hovel, where some unfortunate miner came every night to sleep, on emerging half drenched from the hole where he had hoped to find a fortune, and where, nine times out of ten, or more likely ninety-nine times in a hundred,

he has reaped nothing but bitter disappointment and ruin.

The success of a fortunate miner, like Weber, induces thousands of men to abandon their farms or their lucrative occupations to lead the life of prospectors, and when they have once launched into it they never draw back.

At last about noon, we find ourselves at the head of a little valley, so narrow, that one might almost throw a stone across from one mountain to the other. In this spot is Galena. We follow a rivulet that takes its course, first in one cascade, then further on in another. The music of its silvery ripple is so alluring, the sight of its pellucid water, sparkling in the sunbeams, in the little basins hollowed out of the yellow rock, is so very inviting to draw near, that we dismount, leaving our horses to frisk on a patch of luxuriant grass that falls most opportunely in our way, and quickly divesting ourselves of our costumes, we plunge into one of the most delicious baths it is possible to conceive. After this, coming out delightfully refreshed, we make our triumphal entry into Galena, a town composed of thirty plank houses, among which are a livery-stable, three or four *saloons*, and two hotels.

On our way Parker has been giving me a lesson, for it will be necessary to resort to a diplomacy whose depth quite bewilders me. We have to visit two silver mines in course of working here. Now, this is the aspect of the matter, and it is typic if not epic.

A certain *colonel*—who, by-the-bye, is no more a

colonel than I am—has discovered, on the summit of a mountain that rises on our right, a silver mine of extraordinary richness. He has fulfilled the formalities necessary for its appropriation, has built very important works for treating his minerals, and has found the means, for the last eighteen months, of making them turn out the modest sum of two thousand dollars a day, reaching in certain months even an average of three thousand dollars a day.

Then a *brilliant* idea, but one I should call decidedly knavish, at once flashed in the brain of certain New York capitalists. Having ascertained that the levels of the *gallant colonel*—such is the usual appellation—were extending around a central shaft, sunk in the middle of his concession, they schemed between themselves to acquire, as quietly as possible, a zone of land around the flanks of the mountain, encircling completely the said concession. Having accomplished this, they set men to work, and in a few months have driven a circular level, with the object of closing in the gallant colonel on all sides by *coming around him*—a circumvention at once in both senses of the word. It was nothing but an operation of deliberate extortion on a large scale, and the New Yorkers demanded only one thing, which was an arrangement that would have diverted into their own reservoir a copious stream of that pretty argentiferous cascade that falls into the colonel's day after day. But the latter was equal to the emergency. He did not yield a jot. A point of

law, rather obscure, gives to the proprietor of an *inclined* lode the right of following it throughout,\* when he is already possessor of the ground where it comes to surface. This, it seems, is the colonel's case, and he has declared loudly in all the saloons of the place that he well knows how to maintain his rights. Thereupon, he recruited five arrant scamps, each having at his private account half a dozen assassinations. In this country, this should not have presented to him much difficulty. These desperados, fed like game-cocks for the pit, have been three months in the mine, day and night, armed with Winchester rifles and Colt revolvers. In proportion as the level advances, they establish traverses, epaulments, and other works of temporary fortification, familiar to the corps of sappers and miners, but generally unknown in mining engineering. It is quite understood that so soon as the levels cross one another, the miners will unmask the body of reserve, and the *fighting men* will open fire immediately.

The New Yorkers on their side are not abashed. They have addressed a cheering allocution to their men, and these, inflamed by the martial eloquence of their patrons, liberal rations of whisky, and promises of high pay which accompanied the whole, have declared with bluster that they will leave to no stranger the honour of fighting the colonel's myrmidons. Consequently, since this critical stage of the affair, they

\* That is, within a line drawn perpendicularly downwards from any point on the bounds of his concession.—W. C.

work only with revolvers in their belts and rifles at hand in a corner, and the *fighting men* are duly warned that they will find their match.

I call to mind a reflection that was suggested one evening, a few years ago, on seeing the first representation of the *Amants de Vérone*, the fine opera of my friend the Marquis d'Ivry. After a night brawl, which must have nicely hindered the good citizens of Verona from sleeping, these appear on the spot abandoned by the combatants, and impart their complaints to one another, accompanied with a very pretty air, in words like these: "Good God! what a plague are these Capulets and Montagues! What happiness will it be for us when they are all spitted, and we hear nothing more of them!" It struck me that this was one side of the subject that history has too much neglected, and that in a town as unfortunately divided against itself, the situation of an honest man indifferent to the quarrel might be very disagreeable. In consequence of the speculation of the New York Montagues and the resistance of Colonel Capulet, the peaceful townsmen of Galena—if there are any—find themselves precisely in the situation of the citizens of Verona. The saloons have been obliged to take sides, and the taverns also. The livery stable, being the only one there, could remain neuter, though only with difficulty. For a long time the Colonel and his son only went out accompanied by a fighting-man— not one of those attached to the mine, for these never stir, but another specially engaged as a body guard. It

happened even one day that Capulet, junior, having made a prolonged visit to the tavern, and having treated there his fighting-man beyond moderation, the latter took for a Montague a man having a friendly discussion with his good master, and, full of party zeal, lodged in his back two balls from his revolver. This affair made some noise, and the person who related the story to us gravely affirmed that "the indignation of the public was such that it has cost the Colonel no less than 10,000 dollars to bribe the jury, who have acquitted the man!"

On entering into the town we are received by Mr R—, a pleasant young fellow of about eight-and-twenty, who fulfils the duties of chief engineer—superintendent, as he is called here—of the works of the New Yorkers. He takes us immediately to his tavern, where he gives us a *déjeuner*—execrable, as usual.

I mention an incident very characteristic of the people of this country. Mr R—, after having scrupulously scrutinised the seven or eight saucers that were laid out before him, and tasted the nameless hotch-potch they contained, declared that he was as hungry as before he began. We then timidly suggested whether we could not have a chicken cooked for us—I did not say roasted, the spit being an implement that is used in this country only by the Sioux when they have a "pale face," a prisoner, and the opportunity as well of submitting him to slow torture. We had not long to wait: they brought in a can of cooked chicken from Chicago, a delicacy we by no means appreciated.

The further we go the more are we surprised at the total absence among the American women of a taste for the cares of the household, especially of that sentiment, so predominant with French women, which consists in a fondness to prepare with their own hands all the little dainties destined to be consumed in the family.

The execrable education they receive is, no doubt, the cause. We see constantly, in Europe, American ladies, whose origin, we well know, is of a humble character, and who, having had their fortunes made for them, make a good figure in the world—one much better than that of French ladies in the same situation. We duly esteem the instruction they have received in their village school, and we are right in doing so. But we do not see among us all those women whose husbands have not had the good luck to make a fortune, and whom this same education has rendered totally unfit for the cares of the household or of the poultry-yard. They would rather go to their grocer's and order a can of cooked chicken, which is at once unwholesome and tasteless, than give themselves the trouble to procure or keep fowls; they would rather serve up the rancid bacon of Chicago than exert themselves ever so little to provide for the table sweet and wholesome meat from a pig of their own feeding. I have already visited seven or eight farms, and not one of them had a garden! Yesterday, while Parker was dandling and dallying with the women of Hilly Ranch, I was looking about the house. In the

kitchen there was linen thrown into a corner all in rags, and besides the disorder, it was a hole of abominable filth. The women themselves were dressed in linen *peignoirs* that had never been washed, and full of rents unmended, and the husbands' clothes were no better. Having made this interesting inspection, I returned to the "salon." Here, in a corner, were five or six books, Tennyson, Longfellow's "Evangeline," and a few others of the same kind. These ladies told me that they decidedly preferred *Marmion* to the *Song of Hiawatha*. While replying that I was of their opinion, I thought of the lamentable solutions of continuity presented by the husbands' breeches. When he becomes a millionaire, and has an *hôtel* in the Champs-Élysées, his wife, perhaps, will well maintain his salon, but in the interval she is not of much use to him.

Immediately after our meal we took our way, under the guidance of Mr R——, along the goat path leading to the works. On proceeding along the flank of the mountain we pass directly above the Colonel's house. We have evidently been noticed, for six or seven individuals of both sexes are assembled under the verandah, and two telescopes, passed from hand to hand, are brought to bear on us. As it is a part of Parker's plan to conduct us by-and-by into the fierce Colonel's retreat, we defile under the fire of these glasses, assuming a modest attitude, equally removed from bravado on the one hand and timidity on the other, imploring God and our patron saint that they will be pleased to dispel from

the mind of this vindictive warrior any idea of opening hostilities at this moment, for our persons, clearly depicted against the light grey rock, would present to his satellites a most tempting target. Our prayer, no doubt, is granted, for we reach the orifice of the shaft without a Winchester ball having whistled in our ears, and we descend, with grateful hearts, by a ladder less primitive than that of *Uncle Sam's Mine*.

The New Yorkers have well managed their enterprise, sparing by no means their money. Fifty-five thousand dollars have already been expended without the return of a sou, of course, for they have not yet found an ounce of metallic ore. And so far, there seems to be little chance of cutting the Colonel's lode outside the vertical passing by the limits of his concession, though they are already one hundred feet in depth. Still, we hear very distinctly the blows of the pick from his miners, and yet the stratum of gneiss in which we are is so compact, so favourable for the transmission of sound, that the distance between is possibly still considerable. In any case we shall not be witnesses of the Epic combat announced for the day of meeting, for which the three miners now at work seem prepared with very good grace. They are young fellows with truculent looks, and I foresee that the Colonel's fighters would encounter fierce and desperate foes. According to custom we are presented to them. They shake our hands vigorously, and then we go to take a glance at the tortuous level that winds around

the silver mine—alas! without touching it,—and we scale the four enormous ladders that reconduct us from the darkness visible and the subterranean coolness into the bright sunshine and ninety-five degrees of heat which it maintains at the surface.

Before going downhill we rest a few moments to draw breath. The fine firs around us move to and fro gently in the breeze; the air is embalmed with the perfume of roses; a multitude of little brown squirrels, called *wood-chucks* in the country, are gambolling around us; a little cascade is running at our feet, taking its course into the river along the valley, almost before the Colonel's white house, which stands out dazzling from the shade of the great trees. How lovely all this is, and what a dismal, dark, doleful life is that of those poor devils of miners, the dull blows of whose picks still reach our ears amid the joyous sounds of animated nature!

We say good-bye to Mr R—, or at least for a while, for it is decided that we pay a visit to the Colonel, whither, of course, he will not accompany us. In order to reach his house, we have only a march of twenty minutes by a path quite precipitous, along which we proceed by scrambling and rolling, preceded by showers of stones we have set in movement, and with this *facilis descensus* we save much time. The ladies disappear, and when we arrive before the plank verandah of the house, we find ourselves in the presence of the formidable Colonel and his inevitable

*fighting-man*, who, sitting in deal easy chairs with their feet—two feet at least—above their heads, are chewing their quids with that grave and embarrassed air of people desirous of concealing their displeasure at an unwelcome visit.

The Colonel is a little man of about fifty, whose sociability is not the most conspicuous trait in his character. The sparse hair that still remains on his head, and the few red bristles, tipped with white, constituting his moustache, seem individually to be affected with the same amiable disposition, for they all stand well apart from one another and like quills on the fretful porcupine. As for the *fighting-man*, whom I regard with special curiosity, he has an enormous moustache, such as is necessary to his calling, but still the look of an honest man.

Parker with his insinuating ways begins to speak. He at once presents us in the most approved form, and this is received by a kind of growl of bad omen. Seeing that I was not offered a chair, I take one uninvited, and the little eye of the Colonel remains fixed on me from this moment. Without feeling discouraged, Parker returns to the charge.

“These gentlemen, visiting the country, desire to see all the principal mines. Mr R—.”

“Mr R— is —,” roars the Colonel, with a delicate expression which cannot be printed. This is followed by a prolonged silence.

"And he won't stop long in the country," again breaks forth the irascible warrior.

At this stage I consider it time to interpose.

"Nor we either, Colonel," I said, courteously; "but we should have been deeply disappointed if we had been obliged to leave without doing ourselves the honour of visiting a man whom every one speaks of as the pioneer of civilisation in these mountains."

You must always tell an American that he is the *pioneer* of something, or the *prominent citizen* of some place. The effect is infallible. In about five minutes the Colonel and I were chatting together like old chums. He then shows us his receipt for the week, represented by a respectable number of ingots of silver just turned out of the furnace. Unfortunately he cannot take us down *Spotted Tail Mine*, as he calls his property, for the work is suspended in order to repair the shaft; but he shows us all his specimens, which are very curious. The silver occurs as a sulphuret of silver in enormous veins that have only to be *stoped* away. Some blocks are so rich that they present a crystalline appearance. The average yield is 1070 ounces to the ton of ore, but certain specimens have given as much as 8170 ounces per ton.

He takes us afterwards to see his works where he treats his mineral, and these are very well appointed. We see the crushers and the roasting furnaces; but time presses, and we are obliged to take leave of the

excellent Colonel, who at last is become the best friend in the world.

It is still very hot; therefore, before allowing us to depart, he obliges us to come once more to his house for an instant, and there cordially offers each of us a glass of clear, cool water, and insists that we come again. This is the extent of hospitality in this land of teetotalism. One of these fine days, I must try this sort of reception on a Norman farmer.

We soon return to our inn, where we again find Mr R—. The company is increased by a journalist of Deadwood, who is having a ride on horseback in company with the school-mistress, and they take their departure after a light lunch. I do not know whether horsemanship forms part of the programme of instruction of the young ladies of this country or not, but if they are to be taught to leap a five-bar gate, they would grievously need a more efficient professor.

Three quarters of an hour later we take the same road, after having emptied, on principle but without pleasure, six or seven of the little saucers placed before us, which are in every respect worthy of furnishing Monsieur Bouverie with the subject of a fresh chapter.

It is after six when we set out, accompanied part of the way by Mr R—, to whom we say adieu, thanking him for the cordial manner in which he has received us at Galena. He has cautioned us that the

*Introduction.*

Whatever his opinions and motivations, the fact remains that Edmond de Mandat-Grancey has given us an account of the Black Hills mining frontier which is valuable for its accurate on-site observations, its clinical frankness, its early reportage of stories and anecdotes which have become part of American folk culture, its appreciation of the American western idiom and its genuine humor. More than that, we know that he was instrumental in creating a specific image of the American West for thousands of French readers, just as James Fenimore Cooper had done for an earlier generation in France. Here, too, one sees an intelligent and shrewd foreigner seeking out the peculiar elements which made the American character and democratic institutions seem so different. Although Baron de Mandat-Grancey in his *Cow-boys and Colonels* does not demonstrate the rare genius of his more distinguished relative Alexis de Tocqueville, nor the insights of James, Lord Bryce, whose *American Commonwealth* (1888) appeared only a year after de Mandat-Grancey's English version of *Cow-boys and Colonels*, he deserves a return from obscurity and a chance to speak to and charm a new audience. Now, a century after his visit, his words bring to life again one of America's last and most colorful mining frontiers.

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Yale University  
August 16, 1983

# COW-BOYS AND COLONELS

NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY ACROSS THE  
PRAIRIE AND OVER THE BLACK  
HILLS OF DAKOTA.

FROM "DANS LES MONTAGNES ROCHEUSES" OF BARON  
E. DE MANDAT-GRANCEY

WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES NOT CONTAINED IN  
THE ORIGINAL EDITION

BY

WILLIAM CONN



LONDON  
GRIFFITH, FARRAN, OKEDEN & WELSH  
(SUCCESSORS TO NEWBERY AND HARRIS)  
WEST CORNER ST PAUL'S CHURCHYARD

1887.