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CONTENTS.

THE FUTURE OF MINING.

The philosophy of industrial economics is being applied to mining in increasing degree. The exhaustion of bonanza deposits and the gradual improvement of mining and metallurgical processes have brought into the category of profitable deposits many ore bodies that were not workable a few years ago. The same process of evolution is effective now and for all future time. It is wise to pause now and then for the purpose of observing just where we are and just how far we may take advantage of the progress of applied science.

The task of summing up the present status of the mining industry is not a slight one. The writer who attempts to indicate the future must be thoroughly informed as to the present. Also, he must be conversant to an extraordinary extent with the past. In the current bulletin of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy, Mr. A. G. Charlton takes upon himself the duty of outlining the future from an economic standpoint. His paper calls for more than passing notice.

Most important factors in the expansion of mining are the increase of population, the impressive improvement in mining and metallurgical practice, and the immense growth of railroad construction. Of all parts of the British Empire, Canada has gained most pronouncedly in the last decade. In railroad construction she has taken vast strides. Her population has almost doubled. Her mineral production has been multiplied by three. And we now are on the eve of larger and stronger development.

Looking into the future effect of various natural agencies, Mr. Charlton believes that, with the opening of lower grade deposits, the cost of supplies, wage-rates, and salaries, may possibly suffer a general lowering. In this we cannot concur. The history of mining, closely interwoven with the evolution of larger and more efficient mechanical devices, teaches the lesson that cheap labour is not good labour. The general and inevitable tendency is for wages and salaries to go up. The cost of supplies is controlled by so many arbitrary circumstances that generalizations are unsafe.

A second effect, and this Mr. Charlton considers more probable, is that the supply of metals per capita may become gradually less. The price of commodities would thus fall. But we see no force in the conclusion that there would result a proportionate diminution in the number of openings available for mining and metallurgical engineers. In fact, since the price of metals would have risen, the inducements to search for good mining investments would be greater. Not until the available surface of the globe shall have been pros-