

Mining Affairs.

The past week has been one of unusual severity in weather, and mining operations have not progressed so rapidly as was desired at the different workings. Several companies, however, are pushing matters with great energy, and we hear of one whose milling machinery is now on its way from the east. Three others are now on terms for the purchase of outfits, and it is safe to state that at least half a dozen companies will have their milling machinery all fitted up and a good stock of quartz to commence operations by the time that spring is fairly opened up. There are a few others whose stock is being listed in New York, and what steps they have as yet taken towards commencing milling operations will be made known in a week or two. There is evidently going to be no let up to active operations, as soon as spring opens, and mining, in the Lake of the Woods districts, promises soon to be a growing industry, and not a barren field for unprofitable speculation, as some people would have us believe it to be.

The sales of mining stock during the past week have been considerable, and would be heavier, but there is a disposition not to push sales at present, as there is every prospect of a general advance. The heaviest transaction of the week was probably a sale of Winnipeg Consolidated Stock at 50, amounting in face value to \$3,000. There have been several smaller transactions in other stocks, and the current week will probably show some heavy sales. The exact value of the different stocks during the week it is difficult to determine. Winnipeg Consolidated is still to be had at 50; Lake Winnipeg at the same, and Kewatin holds firm at 75. From the mining bourse we have the report of a prospect of a heavy business during the balance of January, and more than one extensive sale is now in course of negotiation.

The news of valuable gold fields in the North-west is now accepted in stock centers of the United States as beyond doubt, and numerous companies will doubtless be formed there during the present year, as the laws there are much more elastic regarding joint stock companies, than in Canada. There can be no doubt now but capital in great quantities will be employed in mining during the next few months, and a time of excitement and activity is in store for the once lonely region around the Lake of the Woods.

The great benefit that a mining industry will be to the North-west, we cannot better describe than by taking the following from an article in the *Mining Review* of January 6th.:

"That a new era is opening the industry of mining is evident from the fact that the chief element of its value and permanency are better understood and are being more wisely directed than ever before in its history. As the magnificent extent and limitless variety of the mineral resources of this country are comprehended by the people, mining rapidly loses its speculative and uncertain character and crystallizes into the forms of a legitimate business, possessing the elements of a substantial permanency above the many other enterprises to which men devote millions of capital and a lifetime of energy.

"The foundation of a reliable and profitable business is measured largely by the field of activity or the extent of resources to be developed. That mining possesses these in the largest measure no one competent to judge will for a moment deny.

"The product of any branch of the mining industry is indestructible; is always in demand; enters largely into the avenues of every other branch of industry—is in fact the foundation stone upon which they are founded, hence there is no limit to continual demand which must forever exist."

American Iron Trade.

Many devices are now arranged to try and cover up the fact that a period of stagnation is undoubtedly about to overtake the iron trade of the United States, and indeed that branch of industry has already entered upon such a period. The recent convention of iron and steel manufacturers at Pittsburg, Pa., no doubt fully realized the fact; but by fixing scales of prices, and making other artificial arrangements, put forth an ineffectual effort to mitigate the threatened stagnation. With the opening of 1883 the announcement was made that the Calumet Iron and Steel Companies' works would be closed down owing to the low price of their manufactures at present, and 20,000 men would thus be thrown out of employment. Other companies are threatening a similar course of action, and those dependent upon the iron industry have to squarely face the fact that no artificial arrangements can stay the stagnation.

There are many theories advanced as to the cause of this dullness in the iron trade, and if the opinion of such men as Pig Iron Kelly, of Pennsylvania, were consulted, they would doubtless advise the enlarging of present tariffs upon such goods. There are others, however, in the United States who believe that too much tariff has more to do with the matter, and is accountable for the over production of iron goods within the last few years. A careful review of the iron trade history of the United States for the last ten or fifteen years lends coloring to this latter theory, and leaves the impression that iron protection has had a result much like the old saying of "too much care killed the cat." Tariff on iron importation into the United States have all along had more the appearance of being prohibitory than protective, and had the course of trade events been exactly as their originators intended, they would have been practically prohibitory. Such a state of affairs was a great incentive to over-production, and many manufacturers embarked in the business who would never have done so had the tariff been of a purely protective character. While the system was building up a huge industry for the supply of home demands, it was powerless to enter into an export business, and was thus confined to the home field, and in the event of the demand from the same falling off, over-production was unavoidable if works were to be kept running. The wild fluctuations in the prices of iron goods go to prove how much over-production has had to do with their regulation, and the fact that

at several times prices fell so low that many railroads imported their iron, is proof positive that a tariff which is meant to be practically prohibitory must prove a failure in connection with a leading industry of a great commercial nation. It may work for years in connection with some minor industry which is of comparatively little value to a country; but tariffs as a rule should be framed to protect industry in its weak and infantine days, and when they attempt to raise it to a position of pampered independence they utterly fail in producing good results, and a better illustration of this fact cannot be found than in the history of American iron tariff legislation.

Milling in Ancient Times.

Under this heading the United States *Miller* for January has a very interesting translation from the *Der Waltzenmüller* of Vienna, Austria, from which we extract the following:

"In ancient times no mills, even of the simplest form were used, and no other means of making flour were known, than to grind the roasted grain in mortars. The mortar and pestle were generally made of wood, the latter sometimes iron-shod, and the mortar corrugated and the bottom furnished with iron points. The flour manufactured in this way was by no means fine; and if a finer quality was required it was produced by introducing into the mortar a finer iron lining. The work was generally performed by female slaves, but frequently male prisoners were used for this purpose.

Mills were, however, invented very early. Even in Genesis we find them mentioned, and the ancient Greeks ascribed their invention; sometimes to the goddess Demeter, (among the Romans called Ceres), sometimes to one Mylas, from whom the name of the apparatus is said to have been derived. He is reported to have founded a sanctuary to the "Mill-Gods," and was himself honored as a hero. Even Homer mentions mills, although only hand-mills, on which the female slaves performed the grinding. By degrees improvements were made, and, according to the motive power employed, they were distinguished as hand, horse, and water mills. The method of grinding, however, was the same in all of them, and the mill was invariably made up of two stones, of which the upper was movable and the lower one stationary. Such mills have been preserved from ancient times, and in the Orient they are still in use.

As long as milling was not introduced or recognized as a trade, the mills remained in the houses and were worked by the female slaves while singing. But when milling became a regular trade, slaves and prisoners were employed in performing the hard work, which went on both day and night. In order to prevent the laborers from putting any of the flour in their mouths while working; and perhaps also for the purpose of causing them still greater sufferings, they were provided with a wooden collar. After the introduction of Christianity, these "blood mills," as they were generally called, were abolished. In consequence of the constantly increasing demands made on the millers, human power became insufficient as a