

tains, and which according to history had been worked by the Mexicans, at an early period, with extraordinary success. One in particular, known as the Planche de la Plata mine, had a wide reputation, having yielded masses of pure silver, weighing more than twenty arrobas, a Spanish weight of twenty-five pounds. Necessity, however, arising from remoteness of situation, and the war whoop of the savage, had long since occasioned the abandonment of this mine; and it was gradually sinking into oblivion, when attention was directed to it by Count Rousset. This daring Frenchman, having obtained from Santa Anna a grant of the mine in question, made an expedition to Sonora, intending to explore the Arizona mountains in search of silver, and to take possession and work the mine ceded to him.

Great and unforeseen difficulties were encountered, and his followers becoming disheartened, after months of toil and privation, he was reluctantly forced to suspend, though not entirely to abandon the enterprise. Meanwhile fresh troubles befel him, which it would be foreign to our present object to enter upon; getting embroiled with the Mexican authorities, his capture, trial and execution were the consequences.

Aware of these circumstances the Arizona Company set out from San Francisco, immediately after its preliminary organization, in the latter part of 1854, with the view of taking possession of the noted silver mine; the Frenchman's right to which, it was assumed, had been confiscated by the manner of his death. Arrived in the Gadsden Purchase, the little band of adventurers, numbering twenty men, well armed, separated into detachments, one of which under Mexican guidance, succeeded in making its way to the location pointed out as the Planche de la Plata mine. There were, however, unmistakable signs of the nearness of hostile Indians, consequently, after spending a little time in examining the plain, which bore evidence of having been superficially dug over, and picking up a lump of virgin silver weighing 21 lbs. they returned to their camp, satisfied that the Planche de la Plata mine was a reality; but, at the same time, convinced that its appropriation was for the present impracticable, from its remoteness with respect to supplies, and from the hostility of the surrounding Indians. Another portion of the company, arriving at Sonorita, heard of a copper mine forty miles to the north, in a barren and unknown country; proceeding thither, and being struck with indications of the great richness of the mine, they resolved to keep possession; the remainder of the company at length joining them, the further search for silver mines was abandoned. One of the explorers