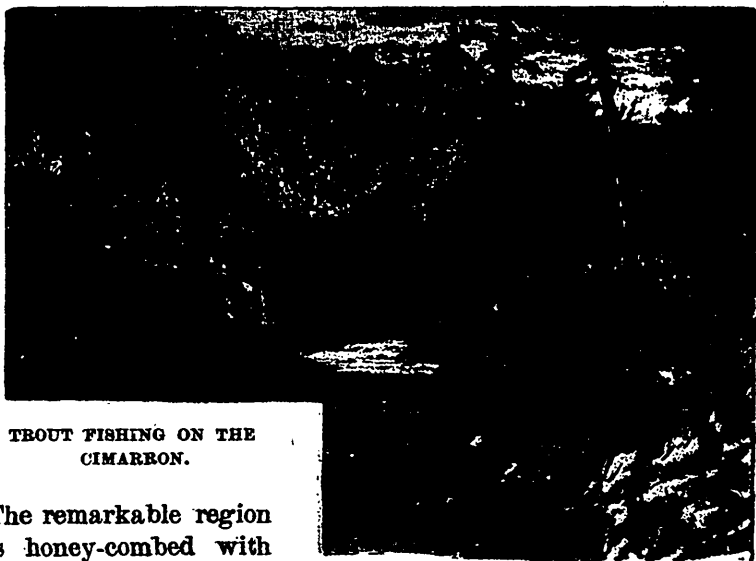


12,000 feet. At that height the snow in the valley lies far below, the wind blows icy cold, the needle peaks rise far above. The steam-whistle among the mountains wakes immemorial echoes. The mining structures cling like swallows' nests to the cliffs. The mines are the richest in the world and bear such fantastic names as "American Belle," "Yankee Girl," "Egyptian Queen," and the like. I procured specimens of silver ore said to be worth \$2,000 a ton. At several points where it was impossible to form a curve, a "switch-back" is arranged, where the direction of the train is reversed and it backs down till another "switch-back" again reverses the motion. These extraordinary groups of curves seem in bird's-eye view to make good the boast of the western engineer, that he can run a railway wherever a mule can climb.



TROUT FISHING ON THE
CIMARRON.

The remarkable region is honey-combed with the different mines.

Between Ironton and Ouray there is a gap of seven miles through a region which seems too rugged and broken for even this audacious railway. A brigade of lumbering coaches connect the termini, but I preferred, in the glorious afternoon light of that bright August day, to walk the seven miles—one of the grandest walks I ever had in my life, reminding me of a similar walk down the rugged valley of the Dala in Switzerland. The raging, chafing torrent, which bore the uneuphonious name of Uncompahgre, fretted at the bottom of a tremendous gorge. The highly tilted trachyte strata rose far overhead. The road, hewn from the solid rock, cost \$40,000 a mile, and the toll for a team is \$1.75. The tremendous peaks of "Red Mountain," "Father