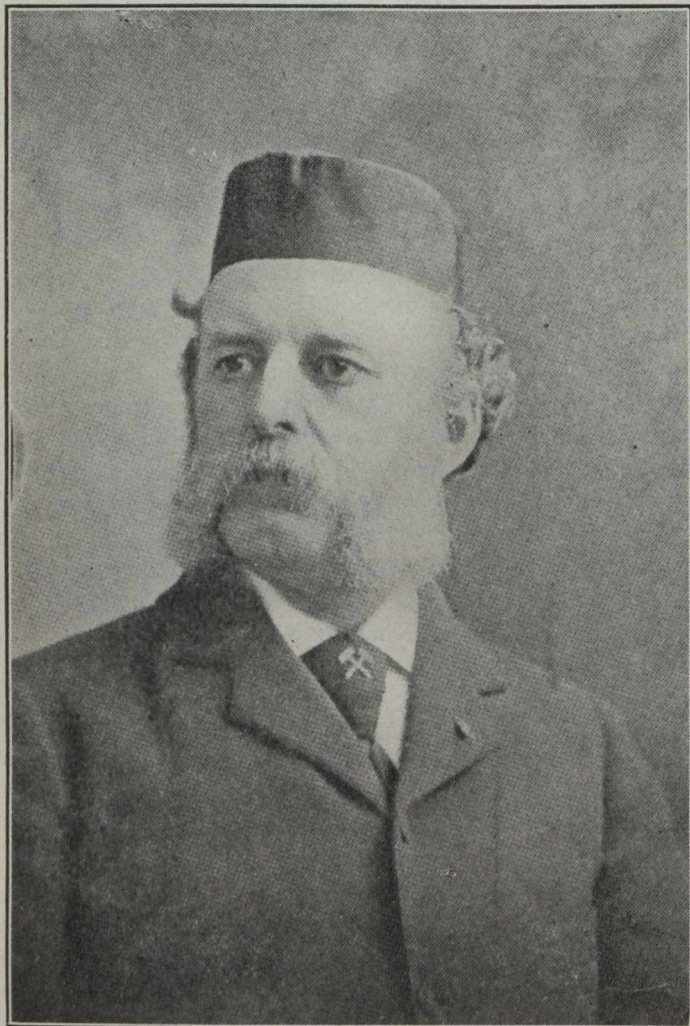


THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MINING ENGINEERS*

By R. W. RAYMOND.

Having been almost continuously an officer of this society since its organization in 1871, I may claim an intimate acquaintance with its history and administration; and I welcome the opportunity to explain in this contribution some features of its plan which are not perfectly understood by the public. Unfortunately, time is not at my command for an elaborate and complete discussion of the subject, and this sketch must necessarily be brief and fragmentary.

The period following the war for the Union was characterized by great activity in mining, and a great



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demand for mining engineers. The mining industry of the Pacific States had been, ever since the discovery of gold in California, the leading factor in the settlement of the country, the improvement of communications and the establishment of civilized communities, with auxiliary agencies of commerce and manufactures, as well as education and religion. The governmental aid given to the Pacific railways, on the ground that these lines were military necessities for the handling of the Indian tribes and the maintenance of sovereign Federal authority

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throughout the vast Pacific slope, could have scarcely been secured, had not the mineral resources of that region given it a thrilling romantic interest and a boundless value in the eyes of the people of the East. At the same time, the exploitation of the Western mines and the rapid development of coal, iron and copper and lead mining in the other States, called for trained engineers; and successive technical schools were established in response to this demand, while technical journals flourished and became more and more devoted to problems of theory and practice, as well as records of new enterprises. Meanwhile, the actual mining engineers of the United States—those who were doing the great work of mining both East and West—could not be said to form an organized profession at all. There were a few graduates of foreign schools; many civil engineers who had turned their attention to mining; a much larger number of miners from Cornwall or Germany, who had risen to be mine captains and "experts"; and a still larger number of self-taught American miners and prospectors, ignorant and jealous of book knowledge, and over-conscious of superiority in many respects to its possessors and professors. This heterogeneous multitude had no common ground for the interchange of views and experiences, and no organized common feeling inducing them to seek and occupy such a ground. The technical journals and the technical schools alike are needed to be reinforced in their endeavors by some agency which should promote personal acquaintance and mutual esteem among the men in whose hands were the mining operations of America.

It was my realization of this feature of the situation that led me, as the editor of *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, to attend at Wilkes-Barre, in May, 1871, the meeting called by three mining engineers, Eckley B. Coxe, Richard P. Rothwell and Martin Coryell, to organize an association. As a beginning, in default of a duly elaborated scheme to suit our special case, the Rules of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers were adopted in substance, and the name of "The American Institute of Mining Engineers" was chosen for the new society without debate, as a matter of course. The rules were subsequently re-written; but the name, though in some respects a misnomer, since it does not fully describe the scope of the Institute, has survived, and has become so dear to the members and so well known to the world, that it is not likely to be changed. A lucky misnomer is sometimes a "mascot."

At the outset, a most important question arose, the settlement of which involved the whole future of the society. Several educated engineers protested against the admission to full membership of persons not belonging to the profession, and not possessed of a certain degree of professional standing and experience. They could not insist upon the degree of M.E. or E.M. as a qualification. They did not themselves hold that degree, but they felt that C.E. or its equivalent in certified experience and knowledge ought to be required. In a word, they did not wish to recognize as fellow-members (though they would consent to admit as associates) common miners, foremen and self-educated mine captains.

There was much to be said in favor of this feeling. Professional societies usually represent professions, and membership in them is accepted as a guaranty of professional standing. Consequently, they make careful