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Colorado and the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867

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At the end of 1865 mining in Colorado, the primary cause for the existence of the territory, was a very risky enterprise. First of all, there was a shortage of credit, the legacy of the Gilpin County speculation boom that had crashed in April 1864, and which had not enhanced the investment possibilities of Colorado in the eyes of eastern capitalists. Such men distrusted not only Colorado mines but its miners, and refused, therefore, to share their bank accounts, bulging with spendable greenbacks, with the area's developers.

The region's seekers of mineral wealth also faced another hard fact. The halcyon days of quick, inexpensive ore recovery were gone, and many individuals found that their former one-

or two-man operations had reached a point of sophistication where additional capital would be needed before newly uncovered ore bodies could be mined at a profit.¹

In addition there was the problem of milling the ores, confined as they were in sulfides of iron, copper, and quartz—strongboxes which refused to surrender their precious contents to contemporary methods of bullion recovery used in Colorado and in other mining areas such as California and Nevada.² Along with mining, this dilemma caused a decline in population as the independent miners became discouraged and moved on to other camps in Idaho and Montana where ores were still easily extractable.

Finally, the population and production centers of the territory were located some six hundred miles from the Missouri River, the last frontier of easy transportation accessibility. Mining equipment destined for Colorado camps had to be hauled in wagons over dangerous routes made even more hazardous by the threat of Indian attacks. Naturally, when the costs of such transportation were added to the steep prices placed on new machinery (much of which proved to be worthless once it had reached its destination), the expense was more than an individually operated mining concern dared to undertake.³

Thus in late 1865 Colorado Territory was faced with high mining and transportation costs, a lack of finances, a reputation as a poor investment risk, a loss of its labor force, a recalcitrant body of ores, and no foreseeable means of increasing the profitable recovery of its bullion. Small wonder then that for the next two years many Coloradoans fell prey to what Rossiter W. Raymond, United States Commissioner of Mining Statistics, termed a "process-mania" as miners tried desperately to discover a method which would force the sulphurets to release their treasures and thereby allow Colorado to resume its place among the producing mineral regions in the United States.⁴ In spite of their efforts, the hard times which residents sought to forestall began to settle into the once prosperous area. As though the injury of a depression were not enough, there was the frustrating fact that Colorado ores assayed a much higher gold and silver content than the stamp mills and amalgamators were able to produce!⁵

What the territory needed (besides a revolutionary method of bullion extraction) was a new group of interested investors from points other than Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Therefore, as numerous Coloradoans experimented with roasters and desulphurizers, Ovando

¹ Frank Fossett,, *Colorado: A Historical, Descriptive and Statistical Work on the Rocky Mountain Gold and Silver Mining Region* (Denver: Daily Tribune Steam Printing Hose 1876), pp. 152-53.

² Charles W. Henderson, *Mining in Colorado: A History of Discovery, Development and Production*, United States Geological Survey, Professional Paper no. 136 (Washington Government Printing Office, 1926), p. 30.

³ Ovando J. Hollister, *The Mines of Colorado* (Springfield, Mass.: Samuel Bowles & Company, 1867), p. 138.

⁴ U. S., Congress, House, *Statistics of Mines and Mining in the States and Territories West of the Rocky Mountains*, by Rossiter Raymond, 41st Cong., 2d Sess., 1870, H. Ex. Doc, 207, p. 347.

⁵ Samuel Cushman and J. P. Waterman, *The Gold Mines of Gilpin County, Colorado* (Central City: Register Steam Printing House, 1876), p. 27.

J. Hollister, a local Gilpin County newspaper editor, began to write a book, while other citizens looked to Europe and the proposed Paris Exposition which was scheduled to open in the spring of 1867.⁶ Hollister's treatise would be fine for North Americans, but a good display of Colorado ores at Paris would reveal the region's mineral wealth and investment possibilities to Europe and the rest of the world. Here indeed was the spot to advertise Colorado mines so that wealthy European miners would give at least some attention to operating those lodes too expensive for individuals to handle. Therefore, territorial leaders began agitating for a mineral exhibit at the forthcoming *Exposition Universelle* in Paris.

In December, 1865, Coloradoans were urged to contribute ores to a collection point established by "a lady, Mrs. Pratt of Black Hawk," who had already gathered close to a hundred pounds of choice specimens.⁷ Mr. Whiting of Russell Gulch offered to furnish and ship, at his own expense, five hundred pounds of the required amount (at that time five thousand pounds) of ore, but he asked that his example be followed by others who were financially able to do so.⁸

By June, 1866, a Mr. Cheney of Lake Gulch had secured space for a display of Colorado specimens.⁹ It was asked that samples donated (which were to be assayed free of charge) contain descriptive data such as the name of the mine, its location, the depth at which the ore was obtained, and the name of the mine- owner.¹⁰ Such notices did not supply the desired stimulus, for at the end of October a group of prominent Gilpin County residents met to consider measures for the territory's representation at the fair. George W. Maynard, a mining engineer and assayer, was appointed to receive and classify the specimens. A committee composed of John Kip, Central City; Truman Whitcomb, Nevadaville; and Dr. N. S. Keith of Black Hawk was assigned to issue circular letters to the other counties inviting them to cooperate.¹¹ Meetings were held in Denver and Central City to impress upon the miners the importance of the exposition, yet it required many trips by wagon and countless hours on horseback, along with persistent entreaties, to obtain a representative collection.¹²

Governor Alexander Cummings appointed George Maynard commissioner to take the ores to the exposition.¹³ At the time of Maynard's appointment the territorial legislature was not in session, so an appropriation could not be made for the expenses of the commissioner and for the installation costs of the exhibit. However, on November 22 a meeting was held and several leading miners and mining companies pledged varying amounts ranging from \$25 to

⁶ *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), May 27, 1867, p. 2. Hollister's book became his classic *Mines of Colorado*.

⁷ *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), December 16, 1865, p. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 6, 1866, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, October 31, 1866, p. 4. See also *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), October 31, 1866, p. 1.

¹² George W. Maynard, "*Early Colorado Days*," undated typewritten manuscript apparently copied from the *Mining and Scientific Press*, State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

¹³ Executive Record, Vol. I (July 8, 1861-May 29, 1870), p. 273, Colorado State Archives and Records Service.

\$100 toward the transportation charges which would be incurred in carrying the samples to Paris.¹⁴

The first ores were shipped on December 1, and the final lots were off by December 3.¹⁵ The heavier exhibitions were carried to North Platte, then the terminus of the Union Pacific, by wagons which were returning to the railway. The more valuable ores were delivered by Wells Fargo and Company without charge.¹⁶ The railroads were equally liberal with the exception of the New York Central and Hudson River, which held some cases until the freight bill of \$64 was paid.¹⁷ Mr. Maynard had preceded these shipments to New York in order to be there when they arrived. When the ores reached that city the first stage of their journey was completed. But there were certain financial problems which had to be faced before they could be sent on to Paris.

In December, 1866, those who had subscribed money to the transportation of the exhibit were asked to deposit their donations in the Rocky Mountain National Bank at Central City.¹⁸ Denver had been put down for \$1,500 to \$2,000 and assurances had been given that it would be raised; however, as late as the latter part of January, 1867, nothing had been paid.¹⁹ A group of Denverites gathered in the chambers of the city's First National Bank to raise funds which would defray the expenses of Commissioner Maynard to Paris, and they chose Frank Palmer, the popular manager of the City National Bank, to solicit subscriptions.²⁰ In spite of this action some of the bills for packing, boxing, and shipping the specimens continued unpaid, and George Maynard remained in New York awaiting funds to take him to France. George T. Clark, chairman of the Colorado finance committee for the exposition, was forced to write the commissioner that he could raise only \$300 (Maynard had requested \$3,000). However, Clark believed that if Maynard went on to the world's fair and installed the exhibit, an additional amount would be forwarded.²¹

Maynard then called a meeting of Coloradoans living in New York, and many attended the conclave held at the St. Nicholas Hotel,²² at that time considered to be the "headquarters" for Coloradoans in New York.²³ He received only one response to his pleas for money, and that came from James E. Lyon, a smelter owner and operator in Central City. Lyon offered to pay the \$64 due the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad, provided that the ores were delivered to his office and turned over to him. His attitude was shared by several other Coloradoans who believed that the ores should remain in New York so that they could be

¹⁴ *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), November 22, 1866, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, December 2, 1866, p. 4; December 4, 1866, p. 4.

¹⁶ Maynard, "Early Colorado Days."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), December 25, 1866, p. 4.

¹⁹ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 30, 1867, p. 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Maynard, "Early Colorado Days."

²² *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), February 27, 1867, p. 4.

²³ Irving W. Stanton, *Sixty Years in Colorado: Reminiscences and Reflections of a Pioneer of 1860* (Denver: n.p., 1922), p. 134.

placed on permanent exhibition and used to promote territorial mining interests on the East Coast.²⁴ Maynard refused to accede to their wishes.

The Commissioner, feeling that Colorado ores would be second to none at the exhibition, journeyed to Boston with the hope of interesting the monied men of that city in his cause.²⁵ There he was called upon by Joel Parker Whitney, a wealthy sportsman with Colorado mining interests who had visited the territory twice in 1865 and again in 1866.²⁶ During his first trip he had become fascinated by Colorado minerals and, once he had returned to Boston, had written a small pamphlet entitled *Silver Mining Regions of Colorado*.²⁷ In addition, he had also accumulated a sizable collection of Colorado ores.²⁸

Apparently Whitney knew of Maynard's predicament, as evidenced by the proposal he offered Colorado's representative. The Bostonian volunteered to meet the total expense of transporting and installing the exhibit, and to add to it his own extensive collection of Colorado specimens, if Maynard would allow him to become commissioner in his stead. Whitney believed that with his connections he could influence foreign capital to invest in Colorado. Having little choice, Maynard bowed out of the picture after furnishing his successor with lists of the ores, the names of the contributors, mines, and districts, the condensed descriptions, and assays of typical samples of ore.²⁹

²⁴ Maynard, "Early Colorado Days."

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Parker Whitney, *Reminiscences of a Sportsman* (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Company, 1906). pp. 137-38.

²⁷ *Silver Mining Regions of Colorado, With Some Account of the Different Processes: Now Being introduced for Working the Gold Ores of that Territory* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1865).

²⁸ Whitney, *Reminiscences*, p. 173.

²⁹ *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), March 19, 1867, p. 2. See also *American Journal of Mining*, II (March 2, 1867), p. 360. In spite of the acute disappointment Maynard must have felt at not being able to attend the world's fair, he did not disappear from history. Instead, his career after 1867 was quite successful and ranged from a professorship of metallurgy and practical mining at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute to a London office where he was, for several years, a consultant to various steel operations in England and Wales. When he returned to the United States, in 1879 he continued to practice as a consulting engineer and maintained his offices in New York City although his work forced him to travel all over the western hemisphere. When he died in 1913 he was considered to be a leader among American mining engineers. See the biographical sketch of George William Maynard by Thomas T. Read in Dumas Malone (ed.). *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), XII, 498-59.



Napoleon, III ruled France from 1848 to 1870

Whitney lost no time in combining his minerals with those from Colorado and shipping them to the French port of Le Havre. Shortly afterward Whitney, by then the official Colorado commissioner, sailed for the same city.³⁰ At long last the representatives of Colorado's mineral wealth were on their way to Napoleon III's fair.

Upon arriving in Paris in March, 1867, Whitney reported that although the city's night life was not up to standard, because of Lent, over two hundred visitors had already arrived to await the April 1 opening of the fair.³¹ Accommodations were easily obtained since many Parisians were vacating their dwellings for temporary quarters in other, less expensive, areas of France, hoping that the high rents extractable during the fair would be of personal profit to them. The principal Paris hotels planned to advance their prices fifty per cent after April 15.

Colorado's commissioner visited the grounds on March 26 and found it unlikely that they would be ready by opening day, as all was confusion.³² The refreshment saloons which encircled the outer rim of the fair building were the only completed structures. As for the interior, only workmen and those connected with the installation of exhibits were allowed within, and every entrance was guarded by *gendarmes* who checked all persons for the blue entry ticket issued by the Imperial Commission.³³

The area allotted the United States for its displays was in no better state of completion than most, and was in fact behind some. Therefore, even though all the Colorado ores had arrived and Whitney was prepared to set up the exhibit, he was prevented from doing so because the

³⁰ Whitney, *Reminiscences*, pp. 173-74.

³¹ *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), May 9, 1867, p. 1.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

department yams not ready. However, he did write that he had been able to obtain a large and desirably located space in which to display the minerals.³⁴

Meanwhile, he applied for permission to issue a pamphlet on Colorado which would contain statistics and provide an index of Colorado resources and results. He anticipated no difficulty since the United States Minister to Paris, General John Adams Dix, as well as the principal commissioner, Mr. N. M. Beckwith, and the New York commissioner, the Honorable Samuel B. Ruggles, all favored the use of such a publication.³⁵

Whitney also informed his readers that the thirty United States commissioners had met and decided that the minerals and cereals of the country would be given primary attention. However, they deplored that neither of these departments would be properly stocked due to a lack of interest on the part of Americans which had resulted in few representative collections being forwarded.³⁶ It was granted that the Colorado and California collections would give their regions better representation than any other section, but the United States would by no means receive the representation it deserved. Perhaps to console himself over the above conditions, Whitney visited the Imperial School of Mines which housed a very large and very complete collection of minerals, but he found no specimens which equaled the beauty nor which had the peculiarities of Colorado ores.³⁷

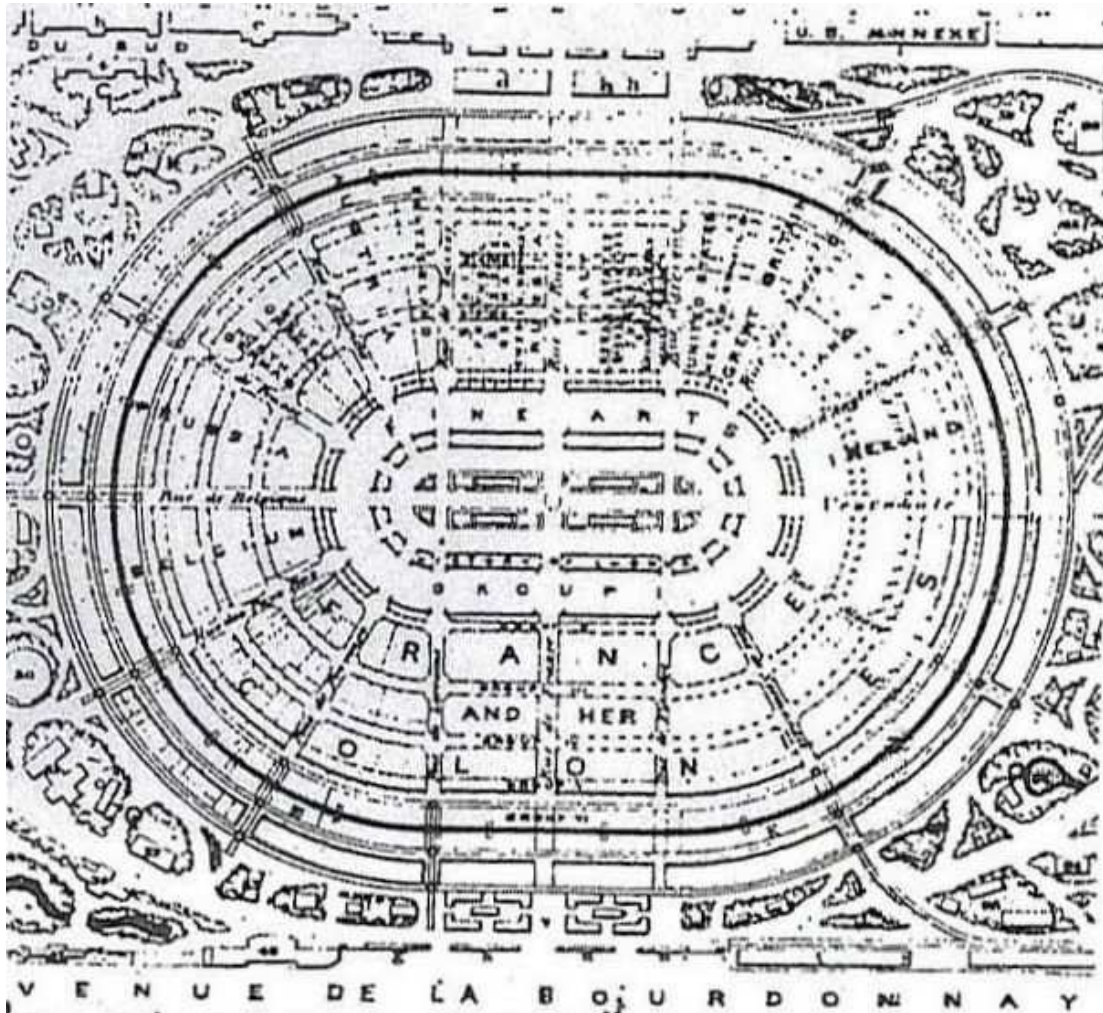
³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

The space allotted to the United States was on the Rue d'Afrique, according to this floor plan of the exposition building.



The Paris Universal Exposition formally opened on April 1, 1867. Since the physical plant was far from complete and very few of the exhibits were arranged, the inauguration was by no means auspicious. Generally, it was felt that the exposition would be little more than mediocre.³⁸ In one respect it was successful, however, because several European monarchs visited France to see the fair as guests of Napoleon III.³⁹

By April 20, Colorado's commissioner could state that the Americans were beyond competition in four areas: (1) pianos; (2) sewing machines; (3) steam engines; and (4)

³⁸ *Harpers' New Monthly Magazine*, XXXV (June, 1867), 1219.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, XXXV (September, 1867), 536. One ruler, the Sultan of Turkey, created a sensation by his presence. It was the first time an Ottoman chieftain had ever entered Europe without an invading army.

minerals. Naturally, he devoted much space to describing the mineral display for the benefit of his Colorado readers. As yet not all of the American minerals had been placed on display, but it was quite evident that the Colorado collection was far greater and much more complete than that from any other section in the United States.⁴⁰

To begin with, Colorado had decidedly the best spot in the mineral department for exhibiting its ores, and this included plenty of wall space on which to mount the maps and photographs Whitney had taken with him. The Colorado ores had been in place by April 10, and they covered about four hundred feet of shelving, the shelves measuring about seven and one-half inches in depth. The largest pieces, those submitted by the Alps, Bates, Gregory, and Gunnell lodes, all Gilpin County mines, were set upon the floor underneath the shelves. Whitney had the cases covered with blue velvet cloth and glass casing, an idea which appealed to Commissioner General Beckwith, who gave orders to have all shelves in the mineral department so decorated. Beckwith also assumed the expense, which amounted to about \$300 in gold.⁴¹

Every Colorado specimen was labeled with the name of its lode and district. On the lower shelf were photographs in black walnut frames, while higher on the wall were maps of the United States, Gilpin's map of the Territory of Colorado, Lowe and Buren's new map of Clear Creek County, the Buell, Pratt, and Dillingham map of Central City and surrounding districts, maps of the Griffith, Nevada, and Russell Districts, and others.⁴²

Whitney had already received three visits from the jury on minerals whose chairman, Monsieur A. Daubree, was Inspector General of Mines in France. The committee was composed of eight or nine other distinguished men from different parts of Europe and Whitney wrote, they surprised him by their knowledge of Colorado.⁴³

The *American Journal of Mining* stated that Colorado was the only region exhibiting ore specimens which had attempted to classify them and explain their history or the nature of the area from which they had been taken.⁴⁴ In all there were some three thousand samples of gold and silver ores, some weighing as much as twelve hundred pounds with several being worth between \$2,000 and \$3,000.⁴⁵

Mr. Whitney had a splendid collection with which to work, and he made the best of it by arranging it to perfection and by advertising it with his printed pamphlet "*Colorado, in the United States of America: Schedule of Ores Contributed by Sundry Persons to the Paris Universal Exposition of 1867, With Some Information about the Region and its Resources.*" Issued in three languages (English, French, and German), the booklet was illustrated with

⁴⁰ *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), May 16, 1867, p. 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ "The 'Representation' of our Mineral Wealth at the Park; Exposition," *American Journal of Mining*, III (June 22, 1867), 250.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

maps and photographs and included a history of Colorado and descriptions of its mining areas and population centers.⁴⁶

Such loyalty and devotion to duty on the part of Joel Parker Whitney was richly rewarded, for Colorado ores received a gold medal. This token was presented to Whitney by Napoleon III at a ceremony in Paris on July 1, 1867.⁴⁷ Thirty-nine years later the Colorado commissioner described the medal as a large one, "intrinsically worth fifty dollars. Upon one side was the raised bust of the Emperor Napoleon and the words 'Exposition Universelle Francais, 1867,' and upon the other [Whitney's] name and award for exhibition of Colorado ores."⁴⁸ Colorado was not the only mineral producing area of the United States to carry off a prize, however, since Idaho also won a gold medal while California and Nevada each received one of silver for their exhibitions.⁴⁹

Commissioner General Beckwith estimated a crowd of about seventeen thousand persons, of all classes, observed the bestowal of awards which took place in the iron and glass Palace of Industry.⁵⁰ The audience was seated about a central area within which a raised dais two hundred feet long had been erected. The platform, which was reached by several steps, was completely covered with a crimson carpet, while at the rear was hung a huge canopy embellished with a Gobelin tapestry and Napoleon's coat of arms.⁵¹ The profusion of flowers used to decorate the stand led Whitney to comment that every conservatory and garden in Paris had probably been stripped of its blossoms the occasion.⁵²

At the center of the stage were seated the Emperor and Empress of France, while on either side of them were placed most of the reigning monarchs of Europe together with the American ambassador and the Czar of Russia. Additions to this majestic crowd were the Prince of Wales, the Shah of Persia, the Sultan of Turkey, Chancellor Bismarck, and other well-known European dignitaries, all invited by Napoleon to furnish the ceremony with the proper tone. Doubtless each believed he had been regally received since the avenue which

⁴⁶ (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1867). Each language was printed in a separate pamphlet. Whitney's booklet presented a reasonable description of contemporary Colorado mines and mining; however, on page 38 he asserted that the outstanding feature of Colorado gold veins was that they became richer as they were sunk to greater depth. This controversial statement was refuted by Thomas A. Rickard in an article entitled "*Persistence of Ore in Depth*," in the *Transactions of the American Institute, of Mining Engineers*, XXIV (1915), 3-190; and later in *A History of American Mining* (1932; reprinted., New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966). p. 119.

⁴⁷ *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), July 12, 1867, p. 4. See also *Ibid.*, July 23, 1867, p. 4, and July 24, 1867, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Whitney, *Reminiscences*, p. 180-81.

⁴⁹ *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), July 24, 1867, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Introduction, with Selections from the Correspondence of Commissioner General Beckwith and Others, Showing the Organization and Admission of the United States Section*, in Vol. I of *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1867*, ed. by William P. Blake (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1870). p. 119.

⁵¹ Whitney, *Reminiscences*, pp. 180-81.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 181.

ran between the Tuileries and the Palace of Industry was lined with forty thousand French troops, each of whom came to present arms as he was passed by the royal party.⁵³

A chorus composed of twelve hundred girls, dressed in white, sang a composition by Rossini which was punctuated by salvos of artillery from the Champs des Mars. The pageant was opened by the Emperor, who read a few words and who was then followed by the French Minister of State, M. Rouher, who delivered a lengthy welcoming address.⁵⁴

The recipients of first prizes, all attired in full dress, gathered at a spot on the main floor in front of the assembled royalty. As the name of each winner was called, he ascended the platform steps to receive his award from Napoleon or Eugenie.⁵⁵

Coloradoans were ecstatic when the news of their prize arrived on July 3, 1867. *The Rocky Mountain News* announced that it was most gratified to have the rich mineral areas of Colorado receive world-wide recognition.⁵⁶ , The *Daily Miners' Register*, in Central City, commented that the "richness and variety" as well as the abundance of Colorado ores made the territory the world leader in minerals and placed her beyond competition by any other country.⁵⁷ Both newspapers believed that the fame gained at Paris would lead to further examination of mines in the region by interested persons and would, in time, bring great benefit to the area and its dwellers.

Nor did the Colorado press fail to laud the efforts of the territorial commissioner, J. P. Whitney:

All this, or nearly all, we owe to Mr. Whitney, as the greater portion of the expense he bore himself. He spared neither money nor labor. He prepared descriptions of minerals and the mines, and the country from which they came, and had them printed in three languages. It is to be hoped and expected that the enterprise will prove personally profitable to him, as well as to the country. He certainly will receive the well deserved thanks of the country.⁵⁸

Shortly after the awards were made, the French ruler made a lengthy examination of the Colorado ores and invited the Colorado commissioner to visit him at the Tuileries.⁵⁹ Whitney hastened to accept the invitation and, upon being received by the Emperor, presented him with a bound volume containing his three descriptive pamphlets of Colorado. The informal conversation which followed was carried on in English and dealt with mining in the western United States and Mexico. The American marveled at his host's knowledge of the areas discussed which, he was told, was based on the reports of commissioners who had been sent

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 182.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver). July 3, 1867, p. 2.

⁵⁷ *Daily Miners' Register* (Central City), July 12, 1867, p. 4.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Whitney, *Reminiscences*, p. 183.

to those regions.⁶⁰ So highly did Whitney extoll the virtues of Colorado ores that His Majesty decided to send a commissioner to examine the territory and then report his findings on the subject. The man who was selected was Louis L. Simonin.⁶¹

Colorado's representative also journeyed to Great Britain, where he visited the great Welsh smelting firm of Vivian and Sons in Swansea. There he was informed by the experts of that establishment, after they had examined his sample of Colorado sulphurets, that they could easily process such minerals.⁶²

*Joel Parker Whitney, as shown in the frontispiece
of his Reminiscences of a Sportsman (1906).*



⁶⁰ Ibid., 184.

⁶¹ Ibid., 185. Simonin accompanied Whitney on his journey back to the United States and, as will be seen, he left an account of his trip.

⁶² Ibid., 188. What Whitney's specific reasoning was in making a trip to Vivian and Sons for the purpose of ascertaining such information is now lost in the mists of the forgotten past. By then it was well known that the process used by the Welsh could retrieve the bullion from the sulphurets with relatively little difficulty. This writer's only answer would be that perhaps Whitney wished to become acquainted with the heads of the organization and used his personal sulphurets as an excuse to do so.