

# TOWER HAS YET TO SEE ITS BEST DAYS

By a Staff Correspondent:

TOWER, Dec. 13.—It is firmly believed here that Tower, the pioneer town of the iron ranges of Minnesota, is yet to see its best days. There is a great deal of exploring for iron ore in progress in the vicinity of the city, and if mines are discovered many of them are sure to be tributary to it.

Tower is widely known as the first town to spring up as the result of iron ore discoveries in this state. The Minnesota mine here was the first to produce and ship ore from St. Louis county in 1884 and this county is now the greatest producer of iron ore of any state or district in the world.

The early history of Tower is associated with Charlamagne Tower, the author-ambassador, who was the first president of the Duluth & Iron Range road, and after whom the town was named.

The Minnesota mine was opened up before the construction of the Duluth & Iron Range road into the town, and a large force of men was on the payroll. Amos Shephard, at present superintendent for Corrigan, McKinney & Co., with headquarters at Hibbing, was chief clerk and paymaster here, and the amount of money disbursed monthly was from \$40,000 to \$65,000.

The road was in course of construction, but for a long time it was necessary to carry the money up to Tower in charge of a special messenger. It will interest hundreds of his friends to know that P. McDonnell, the Duluth contractor, was that messenger. In those days he was the confidential man for the Minnesota Iron company in the execution of many duties requiring honesty and courage. Few knew that he was the man who carried the money on foot from Duluth to Tower, a distance of about seventy-five miles, and needless to say the fact was not advertised.

Mr. McDonnell always made the trips alone. He said that he preferred to go that way when carrying the money. He never took exactly the same course twice in succession, and nobody ever

saw him leave Duluth when packing the wealth. It was his custom to leave the city in the night, sometimes soon after dark, and at other times a few hours before dawn and it is said he did much hard walking in making detours to avoid meeting other men on the regular trail.

There was no man in the county that Mr. McDonnell was afraid of in a test of physical strength, but he had to guard against highwaymen who might shoot him from ambush, or overpower him with numbers. It is regarded as remarkable that he was never molested, for it was impossible that the news that he brought the money should not get out to some extent.

When carrying the money Mr. McDonnell slept little, and sometimes not at all, until the wealth was transferred from his pack to Mr. Shephard, and then he went to bed and slept from eighteen to twenty-four hours. The largest sum that Mr. McDonnell ever carried from Duluth to Tower was \$65,000 in gold and currency.

The Vermilion range shipped 297,722 tons more of ore this year than in 1901 and forwarded 2,033,785 gross tons as compared with 1,786,063 gross tons last year.

The Minnesota mine shipped 275,135 tons this year, as compared with 203,284 tons in 1901 and about 80,000 tons were carried over in stockpile. The mine employs 600 hands and is hoisting 1,000 tons a day, working three shafts. The payroll averages about \$30,000 a month. The Minnesota mine was originally an open pit proposition.

R. E. Palmer and G. Douglas, of the Rio Tinto iron mines in Spain, have been on the Vermilion range for some time inspecting mining methods. The mines in which they are interested have been operating for the past twenty-five years. The product is shipped to England, Germany and Belgium, but a great deal of the ore is treated locally. The mines are operated both on the open pit and underground principles.