

CHAPTER V.

COPPER.

The mining of copper ore in Ireland, as in Britain, has undergone violent fluctuations, owing to the development of new sources in the Colonies and the United States, and to the variations in demand. The demand, however, has of late largely increased, as a consequence of the spread of electrical industries, and no large body of ore is likely to remain neglected. The Irish mines seem to have worked prosperously in the middle of the nineteenth century whenever copper was near £100 a ton; but we find that £90 a ton was regarded as a low price in 1875 (M.C.I. Report). In 1887 no copper ore was raised in the whole of Munster. The zealous working of the ore-bodies that were immediately traceable is responsible for the closing of many of the mines as exhausted. A district set with abandoned mine-shafts and mine-cottages presents a melancholy spectacle; but in many cases it represents the foundation of large fortunes and an epoch of industrial efficiency scientifically applied.

The ore of commercial importance in all the Irish mines is copper pyrites (chalcopyrite), crystals of which contain 33 per cent of copper. The "grey ore" of older writers is tetrahedrite, but Kane uses the term for chalcosine. In either case, its occurrence increases the copper-percentage in the ore.

Geevraun (Horse Island). 1" 40. 6" Mayo 5 N.E. This lode, north-west of Belderg, is said to have been worked in 1861; it is marked on Griffith's Map (1855), but is indicated by him as unworked (1861, p. 149). It must not be confused with the well-known Horse Island copper mine in 1" 199. The lode is shown on the 1" Geological Survey map, running N.E. into Horse Island. There seems to be no recorded output. Reports on Geevraun and the Belderg (*Belderrig*) lode were made by Mr. H. J. Daly to the Department for the development of Mineral Resources in 1917.

A MS. description, with sections of the workings, by Lieut. T. J. Godfrey, R.E., was lodged in the Geological Survey Office, Dublin, in 1918.

Pollboy. 1" 43. 6" Leitrim 11 N.W. (N.E. corner). A copper mine was opened in this townland where the road from Manorhamilton to Drumahaire and Sligo turns off from that passing through Glencar. This is evidently the locality where McParlan (*Stat. Surv. Leitrim*, p. 14, 1802) says that Mr. Wynne raised copper ore from deep pits on the north side of "Binbo." Two lodes, with a north-easterly trend,