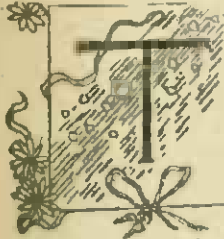


## MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper.  
AFTER DARK IN A MINING CAMP.

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CRIPPLE CREEK, September 1st, 1896.



THE GOLD REGIONS are the only live part of the United States today. Business is dull in the cities. The factory fires in many parts of the country are dead. The farmers are grumbling at hard times and the laborers are either out of work or almost ready to strike for more wages. This is not so in the Rockies. New prospects are being opened and the output of gold from the Cripple Creek district is averaging about a million dollars a month. There are 30,000 men now living and working within a radius of six miles of this town, and what five years ago was a cattle ranch has become one of the busiest parts of the United States. Miners now receive from \$3 to \$3.50 a day, and the mines are worked by day and by night.

You hear little talk of politics and little growling about the business depression. Every one is crazy for gold, and the chief subjects of conversation are the outputs of the mines or the new strikes which are promised on the hills all about you.

I wish I could show you this Cripple Creek region. It lies, you know, just back of Pike's Peak, and, as the crow flies, within less than one hundred miles of Denver. It is two miles straight up in the air above the people who live on the edge of the sea, and its great gold treasures lie, as it were, on the very roof of the United States. You are very close to the sky. The air is so clear that you can see many miles. It is dry and pure and full of ozone. You seem to be breathing champagne, and you go on and on climbing the hills hour after hour until the night comes, when you find all at once that the stimulating atmosphere has worked your system to more than its full and you are ready to drop. Cripple Creek itself lies in a nest in these hills. The country surrounding it is in some places not much wilder than parts of Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio and in others it is composed of mountains which rise gradually upward until the snowy caps of the furthestmost peaks almost reach the clear blue sky.

The whole region surrounding the town contains gold. From it, in 1891, was shipped \$200,000 worth of ore. In 1892 the shipments jumped to \$600,000; in 1893 to \$2,500,000, and last year to more than \$8,000,000. The output this year promises to be at least one-third larger than that of 1895, and now the hills on every side are honeycombed with holes. You could not chase a fox over any one of the old grazing fields without breaking your horse's legs. Here and there you see great shafts standing out against the blue sky with piles of rock beside them. These are working mines, and those big frame buildings which frown down upon you

from the hills are more productive of gold than was Aladdin's palace when it contained the wonderful lamp. The hills are covered with rocks, nearly all of which contain a small proportion of gold, and the very streets of the town are underlaid with low-grade ore. Cripple Creek is built upon the rocks, and the stony streets over which you walk are, I am told, worth from \$5 to \$10 per cubic yard. If the processes of reducing low grade gold continue to improve, the town may some time have to be moved for the gold upon which it stands. A friend of mine took me behind a building in the heart of the city the other day, and in the wall of the excavation showed me a strata of light color running through the darker rock.

"That," said he, "contains gold, and it would pay to mine it. You can follow the vein and see how it crops out here in the alley beyond."

That same afternoon I met Mr. Frances, the editor of the Cripple Creek Mining Journal. He took me through the little pine building in which his paper is gotten out and then showed me in his back yard a shaft, about which there was a pile of dirt. "That shaft," said he, "marks a prospect which our newspaper company owns. Some of the rock has assayed \$20 a ton, and it may be very rich lower down."

The town of Cripple Creek is a wonder. It is less than five years old, but it contains 12,000 people. It was burned down three months ago, but it is now fast being rebuilt. Some parts of it are being substantially constructed, and the people are evidently here to stay. Today it is a hodge-podge of a town. It has all kinds of buildings, made of all sorts of materials thrown together in all sorts of shapes. The town lies on the sides of the hills. It is laid out along wide streets which are filled with dust in the summer and which in the winter become almost rivers of mud. Some of the shops in its business section are more like store boxes than houses. You can stand on the sidewalk and almost reach over the roofs. Others are substantial two-story brick buildings, and an excavation is now being made for a hotel which will cost \$100,000 to build. The cellar has to be dug out with blasting powder, and every foot of the rock is drilled and blown out with dynamite. There is gold in the granite that is thrown out, it is true, but it is of too low a grade to pay for smelting it. A little further on rock has been blasted out for a mining exchange, and good buildings are going up in every part of the town. All of the main streets have wide board walks which are filled with men from daylight until midnight, and along which you may see many people moving during the wee small hours of the morning. What a cosmopolitan crowd it is that walks these streets! There are Frenchmen, Germans, English and Americans; cowboys from the west and tenderfeet from the east, moving along to and fro, trying to keep out of the dust. There are men in velveteens with laced boots coming up to their knees, and there are men in homespun who tramp past you in cowhides. There is the plug hat of the Wall street broker, the bicycle cap of the clerk and the sombrero of the bad man from

Texas mixed in and out with the mass. Every one moves fast. There is some pushing and shoving, but you are surprised at the good order everywhere kept. Now and then you hear a man swear, but there is no shooting, no yelling and abundant good nature. This is the mining camp of 1896 and not that of 1849.

Back from the business streets you see the homes of Cripple Creek. The hills about the stores for a radius of half a mile on each side are dotted with huts, cabins and frame houses of all descriptions. Some are respectable cottages, costing hundreds of dollars. Others are mere store boxes, covered with red roofing paper, tacked on to keep out the rain. The most of the houses are still unpainted, and the fresh yellow pine shines out amid the shacks which are covered with this roofing cloth of red or pink. There are many log cabins. These are flat-roofed, and the earth is filled up around their walls to keep out the rain. There is so little dampness here, you can sleep on the ground, and the only danger is from the cold winds of the winter. Some of the frame houses are of the shape and size of a street car without wheels, and others are mere sheds, knocked up for the time. There are hundreds of people living in tents, and there are boarding tents and lodging tents, in which from fifty to sixty men pay from 25 to 50 cents a night for a cot and a cover. Rents are high in Cripple Creek. There are no vacant stores or houses, though building is going on everywhere. Some stores, which are not more than eight feet square, rent for from \$60 to \$100 a month, and any kind of a sleeping room would cost you from \$5 to \$6 a week. Real estate is very active, and the town is now being built with the best of public improvements. About three thousand dollars a month are spent in improving the streets by blasting away the rocks by dynamite. A number of new school buildings are going up, and there are five different religious organizations which propose to erect new churches. The town has a Y. M. C. A., a Salvation Army, and its police organization is such that a lady might walk alone through its business streets at any hour of the night and not be insulted. There are many nice families living here, and some neighborhoods are as good as you will find in any part of the country.

So much for the bright side of Cripple Creek. The camp has also its darker side. I am told that it is not worse than that of other rich mining camps, but it is bad enough, and, to say the least, it is a disgrace to Colorado and the United States. Along the main business street nearly every other house is a saloon, and in these saloons gambling goes on from daylight until dark and from dark until daylight. There are all kinds of games to catch the money of the miners. You can play any kind of a stake, from five cents to a thousand dollars, and in addition to faro, roulette and poker, there are wheels of fortune, pokey games and games of crap. The miners work only eight hours, and as the work goes on day and night in each mine, three corps of miners being employed throughout twenty-four hours at eight-hour shifts, there are always crowds upon the streets, and the saloons are always full.

Each saloon, it is safe to say, has at