

## THE WORLD'S BIGGEST MINING CAMP.

Special Correspondence of the NEWS.

BUTTE CITY, April 27, 1893.—Butte city is the greatest mining camp in the world and there is no city like it in the universe. Montana has given more than \$400,000,000 worth of precious metal to humankind, and in the neighborhood of \$40,000,000 a year are shipped away from this state. It has more minerals perhaps than any other state in the Union, and this city of Butte makes about \$20,000,000 annually out of mining. It is one of the queerest cities I have ever visited. If you could sail up into the air a mile above the sea level you would be within 600 feet of the altitude at which these people live the year round. The town is located right up in the mountains, and on all sides great peaks rise upward and the sides of the hills are lined with vast smelting furnaces, which pour out day and night a sulphurous smoke. A large part of the production here is copper, and the copper ore has to be roasted in order to get the sulphur out of it in its reduction. The result is that the air is filled with brimstone, and though the city is as close to heaven as any other in the Union it has more of the surroundings of hell. These sulphurous fumes are so great that they destroy the vegetation. The grass never grows here. The flowers never blossom and the trees have long since shed their leaves for good. Until a few years ago no one supposed that Butte would be a permanent city, and the people built houses only with the idea of leaving them when the mines were played out. Of late, however, it has become evident that the will always be a great mining center. The Anaconda mines, the largest copper veins of the world, have enough ore in sight to last for ninety years, and the other copper and silver mines here seem inexhaustible. The result is that Butte city is now founded on a substantial basis. It has a population of about 40,000 people, and it has substantial business blocks which pay a better interest on their investment than the average of business property anywhere in the United States. Rents are high in Butte and business buildings bring in from fifteen to twenty-five and forty per cent on the investment. There is probably no city in the United States that does so large a business in proportion to its population as Butte and there is none which has so big a pay roll. Nearly a million dollars in wages are paid here every month, and the lowest wages are \$2.50 a day for eight hours' work. The smelters turn out about \$30,000,000 worth of ore in a year, and day and night, week day and Sunday, the streets are jammed with people. The majority of them are miners, but you see many well-dressed men and fine-looking women. Butte has a very cultured society, as well as a decidedly wicked one, and there are churches and Sunday Schools, literary societies and Chautauqua circles as well as gambling hells, dance halls and all of the mining accompaniments of vice.

## THE VICIOUS ELEMENT OF THE CITY.

You see the vicious element first, for this is the more prominent. The main streets of the city have gambling hells sandwiched between banks and stores, and gambling is licensed by law. I asked a leading citizen whether he did not hope to get rid of this soon. He

replied that the first step would be to make a law that there should be no gambling on the first floor, and after that they hoped to get rid of the gamblers entirely. This will however, be a long time hence. Miners take naturally to gambling, and the big wages find their way to the faro tables. Other forms of vice are just as open, and there are streets of little one-story houses occupied by women of questionable reputation, each of whom has her first name painted on the door and who usually leans out of the ground floor window soliciting custom. These women are of all races and colors, Chinese, Japanese, African and American, and they are the lowest of the low. Some of the saloons make you think of the Bowery of New York and others would not be out of place in Five Points.

## SOMETHING ABOUT MONTANA MINES.

These places of vice are, however, decreasing every year, and Montana will eventually come down to a solid basis. The mines are rapidly going into the hands of big capitalists. Placer mining could be done by any one, and the millions that were taken out of the state in the latter part of the sixties and in the seventies were largely panned out of placer diggings. Right here at Butte city about \$8,000,000 were taken out in this way before they began to work the quartz, and one claim which sold for \$200 netted the purchaser \$250,000. Another claim near this produced \$1,000 a day for a long time, and one man found a nugget which was worth \$1,800. At this time water was very scarce in some of the claims and fortunes were made in selling water. I talked with an old miner yesterday who said that he had to give up a mine because it cost him \$240 a day for water to work it, and though it eventually panned out well he could not afford to wait. Another man told me that he used to get eight dollars a day for working in the mine at this time and that he thought he was doing well until he found he had to pay a dollar apiece for eggs and \$100 for a sack of flour. The most of the placer mining of today is done by Chinamen, and you find these pig-tailed, almond-eyed, yellow-skinned mortals washing gold every where you go. They herd together in little cottages and every one of these Rocky mountain towns has its Chinese quarter. There are about a thousand in Helena and a great number in Butte city. While I was in Great Falls one attempted to enter the town and was put out by a mob.

## QUARTZ MINING.

The chief mining now done is quartz mining, and it takes a fortune to develop these mines. The result is that the best mines are owned by wealthy men or by large corporations, and mining is as systematically done here as any great business of the east. The very best of machinery and the most costly is used and every mine has skilled scientists connected with it. High wages are paid and you will find as finely cultured men at the head of these mines as you can find in any of the clubs of Boston or New York. Think of a mine like that of the Anaconda, which has actually expended \$40,000,000 in ten years, and you get some idea of Montana mining. The smelters of Butte turn out about \$25,000,000 worth of metal a year, and the Butte mines dur-

ing the last ten years have turned out considerably more than \$100,000,000 and have paid more than \$50,000,000 in dividends.

## BANKING AND INTEREST IN MONTANA.

You would think with all this that there was plenty of money in Butte and that you could borrow it for nothing. The truth is that the bankers get from 10 to 12 per cent throughout this whole region with gilt-edged security and that 15 per cent is not uncommon. The most of the men I have met claim to be making money, and quite a number of eastern men told me that they would not stay here without they could make it. I find the necessities of life which are sold in the stores not much different than those of the east and the cost of the same things in the east, and the only thing that seems to be high is labor. I saw pantaloons in a store in Anaconda the other day with the price mark of \$1.50 on them, and it would seem to me that a place where a man can make \$2.50 a day and can buy his trousers for \$1.50 ought to be a good one. Servant girls get from \$20 to \$30 a month here and it costs you 25 cents for a shave. I chatted with a barber here yesterday while he was shaving me. He was the head of the shop and he told me that he guaranteed his men \$25 a week. Said he: "I give them 60 per cent of all they make, and this nets the shop 10 cents on every shave and it is good pay for us. In the last year or so some 15-cent barber shops have been established in Montana, but the majority still shave for a quarter and that is little enough for this part of the country."

## MILLIONAIRES AND HOTELS.

They have a queer lot of millionaires out in this country. The greatest ambition of the rich man here seems to be to build a hotel. At Minneapolis I found an immense structure, known as the West House, which is owned by a millionaire and which was built by Millionaire West of Cincinnati. John T. West, the proprietor, is still under fifty, and he is widely traveled and cultured. He began life as a conductor on the B. and P. railroad, and he came out to Minneapolis, I think, for his wife's health. He got into the saloon business here and was doing well when his uncle, the rich Charles W. West of Cincinnati, offered to take the Nicollet House for him if he would leave the Saloon. John said "all right," and he borrowed \$50,000 of his uncle. This was along in 1882. At the end of the first year he paid back the \$50,000 he had borrowed and had, I am told, made \$40,000 additional. This tickled his uncle so that he built the big hotel for him. It cost more than a million, and he left him the bulk of his fortune in addition to this when he died. At Helena I found a big hotel which had been built by a famous millionaire of this region named Broadwater, and there is a summer hotel near Helena which was also put up by this same man.

## THE BIGGEST SWIMMING BATH OF THE WORLD.

This Broadwater Hotel has the biggest swimming bath in the world, and one of the leading politicians of Helena calls it "Broadwater's folly." It is said to have cost about \$500,000 and is built over some hot springs, which are about four miles from Helena. Every room has hot mineral water in it and the bath