

CORRESPONDENCE.

Written for this Paper.
TO ALBERTA.

CARDSTON, Alberta, Canada,
October 16, 1894.

On the 11th inst. I left Butte, Montana, to continue my journey toward the British Dominion. Proceeding by rail up a steep grade, and winding through canyons and gulches, the summit of the Rocky Mountains is reached at a point about seven miles from Butte, and we are once more on the headwaters of one of the Missouri river tributaries. The descent to Boulder City, 33 miles from Butte is made very interesting by the grand mountain scenery which abounds along the route of travel. Below Boulder City we pass through a tunnel 6,145 feet long which penetrates the heart of a grand old mountain, which when the railroad was built, stood right in the way and seemed to defy further progress; but the engineering skill of the nineteenth century soon solved the problem. Men experienced in the use of drill and powder, were set to work one gang at each side of the mountain, and though it took months of patient toil and hard labor to make the hole through, the task was at length completed. But not without the loss of life. As the gang of men were about to meet in the heart of the rocky giant a blast which was put in by the men on one side ignited unexpectedly a ditto put in from the opposite side, and the result was that several laborers were killed outright and others were crippled for life.

Continuing our course down through a succession of mountain gorges and picturesque canyons, we soon reached the so-called Prickley Pear valley in which Helena, the temporary capital is situated, seventy-three miles from Butte.

Helena, the temporary capital of Montana, is the oldest town of importance in the state. It is called both the "Golden City" and the "Queen of the Rockies." Like Salt Lake City it is a city of homes, though it originally was a rough mining camp. The city lies in the embrace of the mountains, being built right at the base of "grand old Mount Helena, whose Vesuvius-like cone pierces the clouds at an altitude of 6,000 feet above sea level." The altitude of the city nestling at its north base is 4,256 feet. From this mountain a chain of smaller hills with thickly wooded sides skirt the city on the south. On the north and east the grandeur and extent of the view make up for the propinquity of the hills to the south. Stretching away from her feet to the Missouri river, some fifteen miles distant, lies the beautiful Prickley Pear valley, which, viewed from one of Helena's handsome residences, seems but an exaggerated park. It is in reality an extensive basin, but in the clear atmosphere its proportions are apparently diminished. One of the main attractions around Helena are the so-called Broad water Hot Springs, a health resort about two miles from the city, which is claimed to be one of the finest bathing resorts in the world. The city

also affords one of the finest public libraries in the West. It contains 8,000 volumes, was opened August 7, 1886, and is supported by a direct tax of $\frac{1}{4}$ mill on the dollar. The older part of the town is situated in the mouth of a canyon, along which the main street winds its way; the more modern part includes the most handsome residences which are perched upon the hillsides and out upon the prairie along the foot of the mountain; twenty-three miles of electric railway connect the different parts of the city.

The story of Helena's origin and foundation is a page of pioneer history full of stirring event and rugged romance. She dates her existence as a settlement from the year 1864, when the hunt for gold had already brought thousands of fortune-seekers to the placers of Montana, which in that year was cut off from the territory of Idaho and given a name and government of its own. Placer mining was the great industry of the country and already extensive operations were carried on at various diggings. As these places, however, were overrun with gold hunters, prospecting for new mines was constantly going on and almost daily men left the settlements to seek for the deposits of the precious metal. On such an errand a miner by the name of John Cowan started early in 1864 with a party of men for the Kootenai country in British Columbia, where it was known that gold fields existed; but on account of Indian troubles he was forced to turn back towards the Montana settlements. The party prospected almost every foot of the ground on the return trip without finding anything in the way of "pay dirt." Weary, disheartened and almost stidespairing, the party, on July 21st, 1864, camped upon the present site of Helena for another trial with the pick, shovel and pan. Mr. Cowan remarking that this was the last chance for a discovery. The auriferous gravel "panned out" well; further prospecting showed the existence of "pay dirt," and Cowan and party took out considerable gold. News of the discovery spread and in a month's time people began to flock to "Last Chance Gulch." The "camp" grew as only mining camps can grow, and in the following October it had assumed such "metropolitan proportions" that a meeting of miners was called to give it a name. The meeting was held in a log cabin October 30, 1864, when the name Helena was given to the new town, and a committee appointed to fix the size of town lots. Thus, in three months from the time gold was discovered in Last Chance gulch, Helena was born, christened and well started on the road to commercial importance.

In 1883, when Helena first became a railway town through the advent of the Northern Pacific railway, the place contained 4,000 inhabitants. In 1880, according to the U. S. census it had 13,834, while Butte, the next largest city in Montana, had 10,723.

From Helena I continued my journey to Great Falls. Going up Prickley Pear canyon, we soon crossed another "divide," and then following

Wolf Creek through a picturesque canyon we reached the Missouri river which even up here is quite a large stream. In fact, I imagined that I saw more water in it right here before it leaves the mountains than the volume which passed Kansas City, Missouri, about 2,000 miles further downstream, when I visited that place about a year ago. From the mouth of Wolf Creek the railway follows the left bank of the river through a succession of beautiful canyons until the open country—the almost endless plains—are reached a short distance above the growing town of Cascade, where a fine iron bridge spans the river. From that point the distance to Great Falls City is thirty miles, which is reached after crossing first Sun river and then the Missouri on fine iron bridges.

Great Falls is situated on the right bank of the Missouri river, and has a population of nearly 5,000. Five railroads are contributory to it. The facilities for water power here are unequalled in the United States. Within a distance of twelve miles the Missouri drops 512 feet over perpendicular falls and cascades. The Black Eagle Falls, about two miles east of the city, have already been improved for water-power purposes at a cost \$275,000. Close to these falls a spring bursts from the bank twenty feet above the water in volume sufficient to make a stream 200 feet wide and five feet deep. Rainbow Falls, the prettiest of the series of falls, has a drop of fully fifty feet, and ranks next to the Great Falls, where the mighty streams leap ninety feet. Unlike the turbid river it becomes in the prairie states the water of the Missouri here is clear. Opposite the city of Great Falls, the river has a width of 2,800 feet, but narrows to 1,000 feet half a mile below, preparatory to the first leap in the series of falls.

Great Falls City is 1,682 miles from St. Paul, Minnesota, and 99 miles from Helena, Montana. It is virtually a city of the prairies.

On the evening of October 11th, I recrossed the Missouri river in a carriage, to the depot of the Great Falls & Canada Railway, where I boarded a car in a very slow-going train, and after traveling all night, we arrived at the international boundary at 7:30 a. m. the next morning. On the line is a small station called by some the "Twin city;" it consists of two or three houses, of which the only one of importance is the long one-story custom house; the south end of this plain building is situated in the United States and the north end in Canada. Suspended from a liberty pole on the south end of the lumber structure floats the "stars and stripes," while the English "Jack" is unfolded to the breeze from a similar pole placed on the north end of the building. Mr. Ernest Ringwall, a young and courteous gentleman, did service (so far as our train was concerned) on the American side of the house, while F. Candle, one of mounted Canadian police, did service as custom house officer on the part of the British government. Nothing brought along by any of the passengers was subject to duty except an old gun, which a young German traveler had with him, and which he shrewdly had stuck under the seats in the