

GAMBLING IN MONTANA.

Card playing and gambling are more open in Montana than they are in the east. This country is full of speculators and miners and the whole atmosphere of life here has for some years been that of chance. Within the last decade great corporations have sprung up. The cities of Butte and Helena (and very substantial cities they are) have been built and there is now as much business done here as anywhere in the country. Still the old habits cling to the people and gambling goes on as openly in Montana today as it did when the mines were first discovered. The cities are honeycombed with gamblers and over nearly every saloon you see the sign "Licensed Gambling." The games are authorized by law and there are a score of places in Butte and Helena where you may drop in at any hour of the day and see a crowd around the different faro tables, betting with white, red and blue chips, and this goes on from morning till night, week day and Sunday. There is no place in the world where wages are comparatively so great as here, and there is no city that has so many unmarried men in proportion to its population as Butte. The lowest wages paid to any one is \$2.50 a day, and it does not take an extraordinary man to get \$5 a day for his labor the month through. The mines and the smelting works run day and night, and the men work in eight-hour shifts. The result is that you find the city of Butte filled with men at any hour of the day or night, and this irregularity of life conduces to drinking and gambling. Gambling in stocks and mines and real estate goes on the same way. A man may be worth nothing today and be rich tomorrow, and the result is that fickle Dame Fortune is ever whirling her wheel before the eyes of these people. A true history of the big poker games of Montana would be more interesting than the Arabian Nights.

Big games are played today, but the most famous were those of the past. The gambling which you see on the ground floor and in the saloons is done with chips, the lowest of which represents a value of twelve and one-half cents, and with these quarter, half dollar and dollar chips the games go on. On the floors above greater stakes are played, and you do not find the better classes on the ground floor. The gambling houses are owned by men whose credit is good, and there are a number of sporting men in Montana today who, if they lost \$20,000 tonight upon their tables, could go to any bank of Butte or Montana and borrow a like sum to begin business with tomorrow.

CLUB LIFE IN MONTANA.

I am surprised at the club life of these western cities. Helena has one of the richest clubs in the world. It is now building a club house which will compare favorably in its interior furnishings with any in the east. I found a very comfortable club at Great Falls, and Butte City has a club called the "Silver Bow Club," the members of which represent as much money as any club in the United States. These clubs are magnificently furnished and you meet in them the cream of this western country. Their members are more cosmopolitan than those of any other clubs of the world, for these Montana men come from all over the world, and they are, as a rule, broad gauged men, full of energy

and pluck. The most of them are college-bred and you will find as well dressed and as well-read men here as in New York. The majority of them are young men. They are men who have made and are making money rapidly and it is a rare day that you do not find a half dozen millionaires in the Silver Bow. The club has a fine library, a good billiard room and parlors and reception room. It has a card room as well, and around the tables of this some of these plucky millionaires and others now and then take a hand at poker. The stakes are often large, and they tell a story here of a traveling drummer who came into the Silver Bow Club one day in a rather blustering way. He saw a group of men playing poker about one of the tables. He considered himself a good poker player, and he thought he would like to take a hand. I think he was introduced to some of the party. Among them was, as I understand it, Marcus Daly, Lee Mantle and M. C. Connell, a very rich man of this region. As he greeted them the drummer said, as he rubbed his hands together: "Ah, gentlemen, you are playing poker, I see. I play somewhat myself and I venture you would not object to have me come into the game."

"Oh, no," replied one of the men, "you can play if you wish, but you had better get some chips."

"All right," said the drummer, and with this he pulled out some bills and said with a bluster; "Well, I guess you may give me \$100 worth of chips." A sly look passed around the table. The men were too polite to laugh, but one of them said after half a moment, "Oh let him come in, give him a chip," and, to the surprise of the drummer, he was handed one chip for his \$100. As he looked from it to those on the table, representing thousands, he concluded that he'd better stay out of the game, and he shrank perceptibly and apologized and retired.

FOUNDED ON GOLD DUST.

This city of Helena contains about 20,000 people and it is founded on gold dust. It has as fine buildings as you will find in any city of a hundred thousand in the east and they are built along the edge of the mountains lining each side of great gullies. The main street of Helena runs down a ravine known as the "Last Chance Gulch," and from under its paved sidewalk thirty million dollars worth of gold was taken. The city is built on what was once the most famous placer diggings of the United States, and all about it you see the gravel which had been thrown up and washed out for gold. Even today it is not uncommon in building a house or a business block to find enough gold in the foundations to erect a great part of the building, and not long ago a man found a thousand-dollar pocket while he was excavating a cellar. The country about here for miles in every direction contains gold, and some of the most famous mines in the United States are within a short distance from Helena. New mines are being discovered every now and then and old ones are being re-worked with profit. I visited the government assay office here this afternoon and saw there a block of gold about as big as a 5-cent loaf of bread, which is worth \$22,000. It had just come in from the Old Penobscot mine, which has been lying idle for years, but which has been reopened and is now

paying well. It is located about twenty miles north of Helena and was discovered by an old fellow by the name of Nathaniel Vestal years ago. He sold it for \$400,000, took his money to Wall street to teach the bulls and bears how to speculate. Of course he failed. The mine was again sold later on for \$8,000, as the lead seemed to be played out, and became the property of a man named Longmaid. He did nothing with it, but his two sons urged him to work it. He would not do it and they bought the mine of him. This was about four months ago and this week they have brought in this \$22,000 biscuit. It is the same with other mines and though Montana turns out millions upon millions of dollars' worth of precious metals every year the mountains are believed to be full of undeveloped mines and prospectors by the hundreds will start out this spring.

FORTUNES IN NUGGETS.

Right here about Helena some of the most famous placer mining of the past was done. Along about the close of the war many men made fortunes, and one nugget was taken out which was worth \$59, and another, so I am told, was worth more than \$2,000. One of the banks here has a half peck of gold nuggets and a collection of them will be sent from here to the World's Fair. The chief mining now done in Montana is quartz mining, and it takes fortunes to get the metal out and to reduce it. There are between thirty and forty great quartz mills in Montana and some of the largest mills of the kind in the world are found in this state. A great deal of the mining property and the mills are owned by English capitalists. This is the case of the Drumlummon mine, not far from Helena, out of which more than \$9,000,000 worth of ore has been taken. This mine was discovered by Thomas Cruse, a placer miner who was panning out from \$5 to \$100 a day when he discovered it. This was about 1876. He sold it in 1883 to an English company for \$2,500,000, of which he got \$1,500,000 in cash.

MONTANA SAPPHIRES.

It is not far from this Drumlummon mine that the famous Eldorado bar is located where the sapphire mines are now being worked. I learn here that these mines are to be pushed during the coming season, and that their gems will be placed upon the market next year. About \$40,000 worth of them were sent to London last year and were there set with other precious stones and placed on exhibition. They were pronounced by experts to be stones of the finest quality, and I have met a number of men here wearing stones which they told me were worth from \$50 to \$100 apiece. These mines are owned by the Sapphire and Ruby Company, Ltd. It is an English corporation which has a capital of over \$2,000,000 and it is thought here that the property is a valuable one. Personally I know little about this, nor as to the truth of the statement that several diamonds of the first water have been found in this part of the country.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

ACCORDING TO all accounts, Edwin Booth's stage career is ended and that of his life may be soon. There are no more of his house and no more of his kind to succeed him.