

THE CAMP OF BUTTE.

THE largest, busiest and richest mining camp in the world to-day is Butte, Montana. Once that honor was enjoyed by Virginia City and then by Leadville, but now it unquestionably belongs to the "Silver City" of the Rockies. In many respects it has not a counterpart in the United States. It is the only city in the Union where the cry of "hard times" is never heard, where labor is kept fully employed, and where money circulates freely in all the avenues of trade. With the substantial business blocks and all the public and private conveniences and advantages of the most progressive city in the East, it is still a typical Western town, pulsating with business activity, full of nervous energy and enterprise, and spending its money with true Western prodigality.

The great mining district of which Butte is the business centre is situated in Silver Bow County, on the west side of the Rocky Mountains, and is about three miles square. Within its limits are located 4,500 mineral claims, of which 1,490 are held under United States patent. The daily production of copper and silver bearing ore is 1,900 tons, fully twice that produced at Leadville, which is reduced to bullion and copper matte, or, as in some cases, shipped in the crude state to Baltimore or Liverpool. The various mining, milling and smelting companies give employment to 2,500 men, and pay monthly for wages and supplies the enormous sum of \$540,000. This is the secret of the prosperity of Butte. A large proportion of wage earners, receiving their pay promptly and earning per man a large average rate of wages. Labor is fully employed, yet at all hours of the day the streets are full of apparently idle men. To a stranger this would seem to indicate a lack of work, yet as the mines are worked by shifts, it is a fact that all those apparently idle men have regular employment and are only waiting the hour when their shift shall go on duty. The mines are worked night and day, for in the bowels of the earth it is of little consequence whether Apollo or Diana rules the firmament, and, as a consequence, the city itself turns night into day as completely as electric lights can do so.

Butte, with its environs, has a busy population of 14,000, and property valued for assessment at \$7,000,000. It contains eight churches, three daily papers (*Miner*, *Inter Mountain* and *Town Talk*), three banks, a court house which cost \$150,000, school facilities of a high order and school property to the value of \$75,000, large brick business structures, the finest opera house on the Pacific Coast outside of San Francisco, immense quartz mills and smelters, a good city government, two good fire departments, electric light and telephone systems (the latter extending throughout the whole district and to important points many miles distant), gas works (now building), water works, and all the conveniences and necessities of modern civilization. The merchants are enterprising and awake to all the needs of their business, while their stores and stocks of goods can be equalled by few, if any, cities of the same size in the world. Although "lively," in the sense that money flows freely and is spent

liberally for amusement in a multitude of forms, it is by no means so in the old and commonly accepted meaning of the term when applied to a mining camp. Law and order are supreme, life and property are secure, and there, as elsewhere, he who behaves himself will not be molested, while he who does not will probably only be interfered with by the police. Socially Butte contains as large a proportion of educated and refined people as any manufacturing city in the Union, a statement to which its many fine churches and schools bear ample witness.

Quartz locations were made in the vicinity of Butte as early as 1864-5, but the expense of freighting in machinery prevented the development of its ledges. Ten years later the Utah & Northern Railroad opened it up to the world, and in the decade which has followed this awakening it has grown from a straggling mining camp of 500 people to its present position as the greatest mining centre in the world. The Utah & Northern is a narrow gauge division of the Union Pacific, running northward from the terminus of the main line at Ogden a distance of 454 miles to a junction with the Northern Pacific at Garrison. It taps the Oregon Short Line at Pocatello, Idaho, and the Northern Pacific at Garrison, Montana, and the overland traveler by either route who fails to switch off at those points and visit the famous "Silver City" will miss one of the most interesting and profitable features of a tour through the West. A narrow gauge line also connects the city with Anaconda, where are located the immense smelters of one of Butte's largest mines. The freight shipments from Butte by the Utah & Northern average 12,000 tons per week. Outgoing freight consists chiefly of ore and copper matte, while the receipts are mainly composed of mining machinery, building material, merchandise and produce. The cash receipts for freight at the Butte depot in 1884 approximated \$5,000,000, the two towns of Butte and Anaconda paying to the Union Pacific one-tenth of the gross receipts of the entire system of that great corporation. Careful statisticians estimate for the current year a total bullion shipment from Butte of \$5,000,000, and of copper matte, with its percentage of silver, of \$10,000,000, making a total of \$15,000,000. This will exceed the combined production of Idaho, New Mexico and Arizona, will be twice the product of Utah, greater than the whole of California, and thrice that of Nevada. It takes such comparative statistics as these to make one fully realize the commanding position of Butte in the mineral world.

The following careful description of the leading mines, mills and smelters, and the various methods of reducing the ore, will be found full of interest:

THE MINES.

The mines may be divided into three classes: First, those which produce only silver ores; second, those which yield exclusively copper ores; third, those whose ores contain both silver and copper. The silver ores may be subdivided into two classes—viz., free and base. In the first the silver contents are extracted after the ore has been stamped by simply mixing it with mercury in water, the precious metal amalgamating readily with the quick-