

had no difficulty in drawing the money, as she knew the teller. She then went to a hotel, and securing a room, went to bed with a raging headache, which kept her a prisoner all the next day, and so delayed her journey west.

This was probably the reason why her artist admirer failed to find her at New York. He did not start west until a week afterward. Laura, meanwhile, recovered somewhat, went to New York the third day, and procured a ticket to Butte City.

She had never before traveled alone, and the thought of a trip across the continent to an unknown region, kept her nervous and excited. After a day or two, however, she became impressed with the efficiency and politeness of the railway officials, and rested more quietly.

The journey was long and tedious, but Laura's thoughts were so distracted she scarcely minded the fatigue any more than she did the beauties of scenery, at which she stared uncomprehendingly.

The picturesque hills and vales of Pennsylvania, the broad prairie farms of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, the immense plains of Nebraska, and the growing grandeur of the mountains farther west, were all alike to her—so much ground to be passed before reaching Hugh.

She realized the boldness of the step she had taken, but if, after all, Hugh were alive and well, they would be married at once and all would be right. But if, as she believed, she should find him dead, she would bury him, and—

But the rest was a blank.

So on and on the iron horse flew, and one day, sick and weary, she found herself in Butte.

She beckoned to a man she saw standing near the station, and said—

"Is there a hack I can get? I want to go to a good hotel, at once."

"Bartingly, ma'am," he drawled, and

added: "There's a driver goin' to the St. Nicholas, I'll call 'im."

"If you please," she said.

Soon she was in the hack with another lady and rattling along the city, which looked strange enough to her eastern eyes.

"The largest mining camp in the world, Hugh wrote," murmured Laura, to herself, gazing out at the volumes of smoke belching from the chimneys of the works.

When they arrived at the hotel, she was assigned a room, and asked, as she was too tired and ill to eat, that a cup of tea might be brought to her.

Soon a cheery fire burned in her room, and after a hot cup of tea she went to bed, and did not arise until about 8:00 o'clock next morning.

As she dressed, she planned her work, and after breakfast proceeded to carry it out.

She searched the register of the hotel, but did not find Hugh's name, so she went out to search at the other hotels and inquire for him at the business houses.

The novel scenes around her interested her in spite of herself. She was surprised at the rich attire of the ladies, and at the display of goods in the large stores.

She found Hugh's name on the register of one hotel, entered in February, and she met one merchant who remembered seeing him early in March.

Somewhat encouraged, and very tired and hungry, Laura bought a copy of the *Daily Miner*, and went back to the hotel. She ate the first good, substantial meal she had been able to take for some time. "This air must be good for appetites," she thought, as she drew her padding toward her, and unfolded the paper.

She was looking for quiet lodgings. She noted several addresses, and after a