

ALPINE

A Graphic Description of the New Mining District.

Maysville and the Men Who Live There

The Mines, and Prospects of Future Developments.

Not a town of mammoth proportions or striking pretensions as yet, nor the seat or objective point of any unhealthy excitement, is Maysville, the embryo metropolis of the South Arkansas mining district. Precocious as this camp is, its present extent and rapid growth are entirely due to healthy causes, and are built upon a foundation of future prosperity that is as promising of greatness as the present aspirations of the camp and its inhabitants are unassuming. One year ago the present site of Maysville was occupied as a farm; six months ago there was not to exceed a dozen houses to indicate the intentions of a town, while today it is covered with over one hundred houses, and the demand for lumber cannot be satisfied. In making this propitious metamorphose, no inflated praise has been brought into requisition, as all who visited the district and consulted the future of its mines, were content to settle and await the happy state of affairs that is already dawning.

The location for an extensive camp could not have been more discreetly made. At the confluence of the north fork and main South Arkansas river, and within easy access to the myriads of small camps encircling it; natural advantages are afforded for the ready transportation and cheap treatment of ores on the suburbs, that are rarely found in a mining camp. The water power and facilities cannot be excelled, and the climate is said to be so uniformly mild throughout the year, that ditches can be easily kept open at all seasons, thus making the ordinary and most costly mode of milling or smelting power superfluous, and an item of reduced expense in the treatment of ores that will eventually result in profit to the miner. But a short distance from the town, there is an abundance of timber of a growth suited to building and mining purposes, as well as extensive forests of pinons and scrub cedar that can be all utilized for charcoal. Nature has also provided the other features of deposit so essential in the fluxing and proper smelting of ores with care, and to a remarkable degree of extent.

Like all primitive mining camps, one street constitutes Maysville entire. But unlike most primitive mining camps, its buildings are of a substantial character, and evidently erected with the intention of making them permanent structures. Many are two stories in height, finished on the outside-- in some instances having verandas and the various features of ornament that make a business house, or home attractive-- and painted in truly metropolitan style.

The street, at all hours of the day and night, presents a sombre and strikingly puritanical aspect, there being an utter lack of excitement both among the inhabitants and arrivals, and an almost painful depression of trivial immorality. An occasional insipid drunk is watched by the eagle-eyed marshal with an avidity that is amusing, and gloated over by the police judge with a delight that is almost fiendish. It's no use. A noisy worship at the shrine of Bacchus in Maysville is prolific of but one end, and that an unhappy one - "cooler" for the night, turbulent headache and untasted breakfast for the morning-- at ten a.m. judge interrogates-- marshal witnesses and reiterates-- prisoner feels scanty purse and expostulates-- can't be helped, court must execute painful duty-- victim of over indulgence is "sherried" into the street-- his pocket-book looks like a consumptive climbing Pike's peak-- his face bears the impress of smothering vengeance--"stands off" Billy Harris for a cocktail-- mumps the town-- leaves personal effects in "hock"-- and hies to Poncha Springs or some other congenial clime. It's rough, unwestern and all that sort of thing, but the will of the court must be done. Police judges sometimes pine and fret away what should be the pleasant moments of life, in bitter mental comment and reproaches on the morality of their community. Such is not the

Maysville (cont.)

case with Maysville's judge, however, as he is never found beneath a cloud of ill-humor, is affable to a fault, and condoles with every prisoner after conditions are fulfilled and the gates of freedom are opened upon him.

A large dance-hall was opened, but in a short while its prosperity was numbered among the decayed embers of a past hope. Its doors are yet open and the floors cleanly swept and waxed in anticipation of coming events. The faro table -- which is the principal index of prosperity in the west-- is opened to the speculative nightly, at different places, and the "tenderfoot" and "old-timer" are at all times to be found in peaceful harmony of feeling and pleasure, in a united effort to "tap the bankroll". This is about the only place, in fact, where such proverbially antagonistic bodies meet in an affiliation of mutual respect and admiration. Conspicuous among the "knights of the green cloth" who are installed as local fixtures is "Texas George", one of the most noted and honorable of gamblers on the frontier. Poker and pin-pool are the most popular pastimes, and the medium through which much money is floated in dissipation.

Society here is in a complete state of organization and wonderfully straight-laced. At intervals of two or three weeks, Terpsichore invades the town and holds high carnival with the inhabitants. On such occasions, enthusiasm prevails in all circles, and those who are not directly numbered as slaves to the temporary reign of "the least a vestal of the virgin nine" - muses worship in inclination from afar and make the intensity of an unquenchable desire obvious to all, by constituting in an immovable state that superfluous ballroom fixture known as a "wall-flower".

A few nights since the dining room of the Hughes hotel was the scene of a very enjoyable dancing affair; both young and old turning out in goodly numbers. The event, although somewhat impromptu, and not - strictly speaking - covered with conventional mantle, was conducted and enjoyed in an exemplary manner, and was pervaded throughout with an air of refinement that rarely exists under similar circumstances. The young gentlemen present did their utmost in trying on the "pretty", but would relax frequently into moods of bashful reserve and endeavor to make their appearance unconstrained by mercilessly chewing tooth-picks, with which they were plentifully supplied.

The town boasts a piano and organ, which are kept in busy employment at all reasonable hours. The former is in the Hughes hotel parlor, and is not only the cynosure of attraction for the inmates of the house, but a medium of pleasure for the entire community. Musicians are not wanting, as that delectable class of people is indeed abundant here. They are not mediocre in point of accomplishment either. Mrs. Al Lewis, of Cairo, Illinois, a most talented performer on the piano, and Mr. Julius Howells, of Richmond, Indiana, a young disciple of Paganini, regale large audiences in the parlor nightly, and discourse the melodies of the opera in a truly artistic and classical manner. At such times the life of the town centers in the immediate vicinity and remain in subdued delight for hours listening to the performances.

A first local marriage is the greatest coming event that the people look forward to with hopeful pleasure, and judging by the way the exuberant youth is taxing his meliloquent powers in constant moon-lit appeals to the fair divinities, there is every possibility of the public desire being satiated at no far distant day, in a manner that will prove monotonous. The approaching fourth of July is also looked forward to with joyful anticipation, and active measures are being taken to make it a most memorable day in the history of Maysville. The various committees appointed to complete the necessary details are as busy as bees in

summer time. To be sure the juvenile desire will be fed its natural meal of fire and fumes, and its inclination will be allowed to feed on fire-crackers, squibs, pin-wheels, roman candles, sky-rockets, and all the numerous et ceteras that compose entire the pot-pourri of fireworks. After the morning salutation to the national holiday, the inhabitants will retire en masse to picnic grounds close by, and spend the greater portion of the day in listening to oratorical demonstrations, climbing a greased pole, running foot races, chasing greased pigs, and emulating the many precedents established by our forefathers as essential features of enjoyment for the glorious fourth. "As twilight melts beneath the moon away" five balloons will be sent heavenward from the center of town, which will practically terminate the pleasures of the occasion.

The forest fires that prevailed in the Gunnison country last summer and fall, are awakened to a renewed life and spreading to the eastern slope of the range. Within the past week Poncha pass has been the scene of fires daily, while the section of timbered land west of Maysville and towards timber line, has been greatly devastated and is still burning. These fires are mainly due to the carelessness of late arrivals from the east, who do not put out their camp fires when moving. In some instances, prospectors burn sections of country that are covered with thick undergrowth, for the purpose of facilitating prospecting, an act that is almost criminal. An example should be made of such men by punishing them severely, which is the only effective manner to quell this calamity.

Maysville, like most new camps, is defective in its mail service, and Leadville suffers greatly from the inability to get its mail to or from here in less time than five or six days. Letters leaving Leadville in the morning should, if properly transmitted, reach here at ten o'clock a.m. of the following day. They never do, however, and the consequence is that the people are daily adding to their vocabulary of profanity, to give force to their expressions of condemnation of the department and its officials. Such a state of affairs works great injury in a mining camp and is a public evil that can not be ameliorated any too soon.

Accommodation for visitors is excellent, there being three large hotels. The Hughes house is the largest and most prominent, and exceedingly popular. Mr. J. Hughes, the urbane proprietor, is an old resident in the Rockies, his life as a mountaineer dating back to '64, when he settled in Montana. The personification of occidental courtesy, he quickly ingrafts himself into the esteem of all who meet him, and quickly converts them into steadfast friends. He is assisted at the register by Mr. Will C. Canon, of New Albany, Indiana, who is a masterpiece of affability.

Apropos: Speaking of hotels brings to mind the fact that Colorado beef is either degenerating in quality, or being crowded out of the home market by an importation of decrepit bulls from the freight routes of New Mexico. The anguish of mind, and the bitterness of life that a Maysville steak contains, is truly astonishing. If one has been compelled at any time, through force of circumstances, to depend for subsistence on boot legs or the inner soles of shoes, it is all right. That is to say, the beef here is all right, and will suffice as an acceptable substitute for the unattainable. But if one is accustomed to find beef yield under the ordinary application of the chewing process, I would recommend to such that the companionship of a sausage machine and a quantity of extract of beef be obtained before coming here. In addition to this, exercise your digestive organs on sawdust and glue chips for a few weeks previous to arrival, and in eating your initiatory meal, think not of things mundane, but apply your thoughts to the great hereafter and matters appertaining to the everlasting life, so that your immo^rtal desires will be flavored with brimstone and sulphur, and you can fearfully immolate your profane weakness on the altar of a public infliction.

A visitor recently accused the butcher of cutting the steaks "crossways", and drew inferences covertly that the estimable carver was an incompetent person in the business. The moon was ominously clouded with blood for a few moments thereafter, but soon came from beneath its gory shade. And the butchers' knife was plied in the same direction as before, and the steak looked and tasted as it did before, and the visitor eat and commented not thereupon. It is early in the season yet, however, and there is a faint hope that the beef will improve.

The merchants are all doing an extensive retail business, their daily receipts in some instances approximating five hundred dollars. Messrs. Johnson & Randol, the grocers, are very popular, and their headquarters present a lively and prosperous aspect at all hours of the day.

The Follett Brothers, formerly of Detroit, Michigan, are operating an extensive hardware business. These young gentlemen have been heavy speculators in grain during years past, and are as a consequence away up in business qualifications.

Messrs. Harris & Brennan, two of ye "old-timers", are the proprietors of extensive billiard parlors and an alcoholic dispensary that was imported from away back in Anderson county. Their house is the best arranged and finished in the town, and a very popular resort. Its success, however, is a matter of secondary importance, as they are owners in the Columbus, one of the best paying mines in the district.

Prospectors here cannot complain on the score of their assaying authority, as that essential branch of mining camp enterprise is well supplied with honest and authentic representatives. Mr. W. J. Ayres, a school of mines graduate of Cornell, has established himself here, and is a genial favorite among the prospectors, as is attested by the extraordinary run of business he is having.

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The irrepressible Colonel Henry Altman, who has been identified with the history of Colorado for the past twenty years, and a prime factor in its every political purity, is an acquisition the camp may well be proud of. A marvel in conversational ability, the personification of urbanity, plebeian in assumption, an expert in mining experiences, and a thorough cosmopolite, he combines all the attributes so essential to success in a mining community. He has done immense good for this section in placing mining property in the hands of those who will prosecute developments extensively, and in one instance has attracted \$200,000 from far eastern mining circles to this district, all of which will be placed in work.

The Mount Shavano company's ten ton smelter will soon be in operation on a trial run of fifty or seventy-five tons of ore. An event that the prospectors and mine owners look forward to with much gratification. Mr. George Partridge is the general superintendent.

The Erie Consolidated Mining and Milling company have cleared a foundation for their twenty-five ton smelter that is daily expected to arrive. Mr. H. M. Sill, an old-time San Juaner is general superintendent.

A short distance from town there is one of the most peculiar mineral formations that exists in the state. The locality is known as Crazy Man's camp, and is attracting great attention from men of mining erudition, all of whom seem to be in a quandary as to the nature of the deposits. Messrs. Henry Altman and Professor H. D. Chase have five claims on the mineral belt, upon some of which there has been considerable work done. On the Little Lida there is a shaft

from the upper wall of the vein, a depth of seventy-nine feet, that has not yet defined the floor wall. Beneath the granitic cap a streak of shale lime, not to exceed two feet in thickness, was passed through, and the mineral existence that is such a puzzler found to exist in a uniform body to the present depth. Its character is micaceous granite in a state of decomposition with mineral stains disseminated through it. Below on the hillside, crystallized lime crops out, which fact gives truth to the claim for a contact. In a shale formation that caps this, seams of mineral are found that give excellent returns, pitching at an acute angle into the hill and to the lime floor. And the natural inference is that they are feeders of an ore body overlaying the contact floor. In other places green copper seams crop out, and on development show the same regularity of angle. As to the reputed richness of the sixty-five foot of ore in the shaft there is a difference of opinion. Local assayers claim that nothing more than a few ounces can be obtained to the ton, while a test made by Prof. Charles S. West, of Wilmington, Delaware, gives a return of \$80.98 to the ton of gold, silver and lead, the latter showing a large percentage. The discrepancy is accounted for by Prof. Chase, who says that the ordinary assaying process is insufficient as a test. If the above return is indisputable, the property in question is an exceedingly valuable one, as there is no estimating the extent of ore, the belt being defined for at least a mile.

A body of peculiar mineral was recently discovered in the Gasket mine, on Pomeroy mountain. It has the appearance of agatized wood, and in assay yields seventy per cent. lead and thirty grains silver to the ton. The ore body is said to be two and one-half feet in thickness.

In company with Mr. Ben Follett and a dilapidated buckboard that he is ashamed to lay claim of ownership to, I visited the famous Mountain Chief mine, in Cree's camp, on Babcock mountain, recently, which is one of the producing properties of the district. A road is being built to it that is within a quarter of a mile of being completed, and that being done, ore wagons will be put to work hauling immediately. The mine is located above timber line and 12,500 feet above sea level, in the silurian belt which reaches its eastern extreme in this mountain. The vein is traceable for some distance on the surface, and is opened from its apex by an incline shaft, that defines it to pitch into the mountain at an angle of forty-five degrees. So regular is this angle, that one can stand at the surface workings, and looking down can see the miners in the breast--one hundred and eighty feet distant--lighting their pipes. The surface improvements consist of a large boarding house, an ore house, that is filled to the rafters with mineral, and a blacksmith shop, that is also used for storing mineral. The hoisting is done with a whip, and twenty-five men are employed in the numerous stopes and levels. A cross-cut, twenty feet deep, was driven to tap the vein, and from the face of this the shaft was driven. At a depth of thirty feet a north and south level is being driven, the former being forty, and the latter seventy feet deep. From this level overhand stoping is being prosecuted vigorously, and a connection is being driven from the face of the cross-cut to facilitate the production. Fifty feet further down on the vein the No. 2 north level is in ninety feet, with a good streak of ore in its breast. At its juncture with the shaft a good body of carbonates is exposed, and being stoped out underhand. Two more levels are started north and south, at distances of fifty feet apart, and in the lower or fourth, a body of ore nearly two feet in thickness is opened, that yields a mill run of five hundred ounces in silver to the ton. The upper or hang wall of the vein is blue lime, and the foot wall crystallized lime. Both walls are clean and unbroken throughout, and extremely well defined. The ore body varies in thickness from six inches to eight feet, and is about the only material found in the crevice, save now and then a little streak of slicken-sides. Its quality is very rich

throughout, the lower grade averaging about two hundred ounces silver to the ton, while the higher runs up in the thousands, of silver, and as much as sixty-five per cent lead. It is principally a carbonate. Owing to the poor facilities for transportation, the output is not taxed to its utmost, and at the present averages five tons per day. Colonel A. C.. Babcock and the Follett brothers are the owners.

Time goes on and with it come changes; and the latest of these is the importance which the South Arkansas mining district is assuming in the state mart. In the minds of those who have come and seen, there does not exist a doubt in regard to the brilliant future that is awaiting this section, and especially has this been the case with Leadville men, many of whom are becoming financially interested in the surrounding mines. The disadvantages that have long beset this locality are fast becoming engulfed in the tidal wave of progression that is flooding the state, and the prejudices that have long existed are acting on the rebound for the county's good. It cannot be said that the mines are inaccessible, as the building of good roads to all of them is practicable. And it is not a costly necessity either; as take a case in hand--the building of the Cree camp road. This a five and a quarter miles $\frac{1}{4}$ in length and a dead climb all the way. Yet an excellent grade has been obtained and the road has been constructed to its present terminus for the insignificant sum of fifteen hundred dollars.

It is generally the custom in mining camps for prospectors to make the most of ten feet holes, and idly await the coming capitalist if need be, an entire season, in preference to developing a claim, let it show up ever so well. This district is not an exception to the custom, but on the contrary an example of how extreme it grows under certain circumstances. Since a few sales of some of the important mines have been perfected, prospectors have received a new stimulus for indolence and inactivity in the developments that they should persistently prosecute, and have been awaiting with patience the consummation of pending sales or the advent of cash buyers. The starting up of the smelters will no doubt have the effect of inspiring the prospectors to renewed activity, when great results can be confidently looked for. E.D.C.

Maysville, June 10.