

sprinkling clothes by blowing water out of their mouths. Early or late, you will find these industrious little yellow men at work. One shuffles back and forth from the hydrant, carrying water for the morning wash in old coal-oil cans hung to a stick balanced across his shoulders. More Indians now—a "buck" and two squaws, leading ponies heavily laden with tent, clothes, and buffalo robes. A rope tied around a pony's lower jaw is the ordinary halter and bridle of the Indians. These people want to buy some article at the saddler's shop. They do not go in, but stare through the windows for five minutes. The saddler, knowing the Indian way of dealing, pays no attention to them. After a while they all sit down on the ground in front of the shop. Perhaps a quarter of an hour passes before the saddler asks what they want. If he had noticed them at first, they would have gone away without buying.

Now the great event of the day is at hand. The cracking of a whip and a rattle of wheels are heard up the street: the stage is coming. Thirty-six hours ago it left the terminus of the railroad one hundred and fifty miles away. It is the connecting link between the little isolated mountain community and the outside world. No handsome Concord coach appears, but only a clumsy "jerky" covered with dust. The "jerky" is a sort of cross between a coach proper and a common wagon. As an instrument of torture this hideous vehicle has no equal in modern times. The passengers emerge from its cavernous interior looking more dead than alive. A hundred able-bodied men, not one of them with a respectable coat or a tolerable hat, save two flashy gamblers, look on at the unloading of the luggage. The stage goes off to a stable, and the crowd disperses, to rally again, largely reinforced, at the word that there is to be a horse-race.

Now the drinking saloons—each one of which runs a faro bank and a table for "stud poker"—are lighted up, and the gaming and guzzling begin. Every third building on the principal business street is a saloon. The gambling goes on until daylight without any effort at concealment. In all the Montana towns keeping gaming-tables is treated as a perfectly legitimate business. Indeed, it is licensed by the Territorial laws. Some of the saloons have music, but this is a rather superfluous attraction. In one a woman sings popular ballads in a cracked voice, to the accompaniment of a banjo. Women of a certain sort mingle with the men and try their luck at the tables. Good order usually prevails, less probably from respect for law than from a prudent recognition of the fact that every

man carries a pistol in his hip-pocket, and a quarrel means shooting. The games played are faro and "stud poker," the latter being the favorite. It is a game in which "bluff" goes farther than luck or skill. Few whisky saloons in Montana are without a rude pine table covered with an old blanket, which, with a pack of cards, is all the outfit required for this diversion.

The main street of the frontier town, given up at night to drinking and gambling, by no means typifies the whole life of the place. The current of business and society, on the surface of which surges a deal of mud and drift-wood, is steady and decent. There are churches and schools and a wholesome family life.

From Missoula my route led northward over a range of mountains through the Coriaca defile, and across a forest of firs, pines, and tamaracks, down into the valley of the Jocko River, where the agency of the Flathead Indians is established. These are the Indians with whom General Garfield made a treaty in 1872. A portion of them lived in the Bitter Root Valley, and the negotiations conducted by Garfield were to induce them to remove to the reservation. Most of the chiefs signed the treaty, under the persuasive influence of a promise of five thousand dollars a year for ten years; but Charlo, the head chief, refused. He, with about three hundred followers, still lives on the Bitter Root, subject to no agency and receiving no annuity or other form of government gratuity. These Indians have farms and stock-ranges which they hold separately, not by any legal title, but by agreement among themselves.

The Flathead reservation contains about 1,500,000 acres of land, and is inhabited by less than twelve hundred Indians and half-breeds, belonging to the Flathead, Pend d'Oreille, Nez-Percé, and Kootenay tribes. I traversed it for its entire length of sixty miles along the Jocko and Pend d'Oreille rivers. Allowing only four persons to a family the area of the reservation amounts to five thousand acres for each family living upon it, a pretty liberal allowance when it is remembered that a white family can get only one hundred and sixty acres from the Government. Much of the reservation is mountain land of no value save for the timber on it, but there is ten times as much fine valley and grazing land as the Indians can make any use of. As a rule the Indian reservations take the best part of the Western country. They are absurdly large. Nearly half of Montana is Indian territory to-day. Five or six thousand Blackfeet, Gros Ventres and Piegiens hold a country north of the Missouri River as large as the State of Pennsylvania; two thousand Crows occupy a region south of the Yellowstone