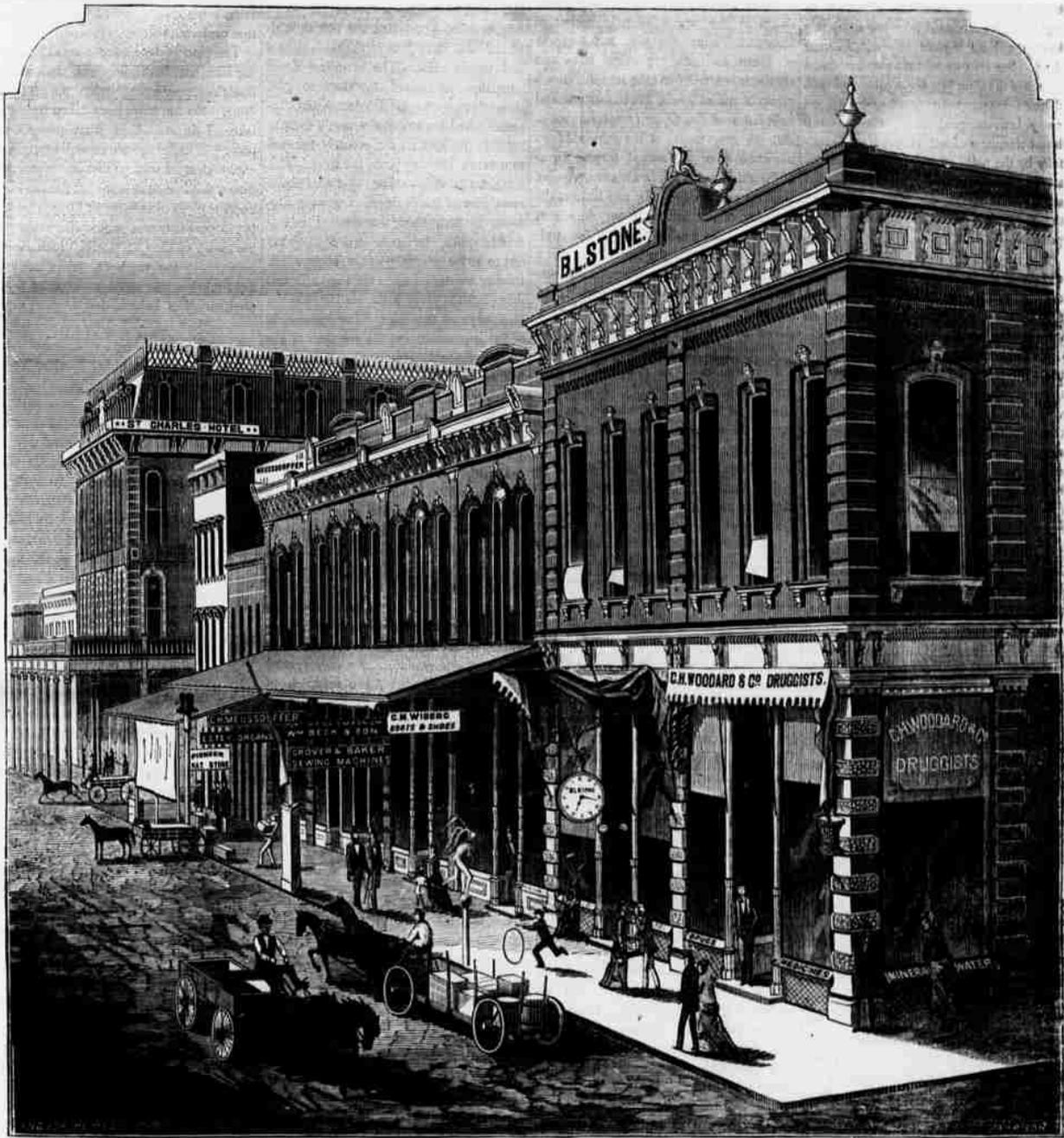


THE WEST SHORE.

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FRONT STREET, PORTLAND, LOOKING SOUTH FROM ALDER.

AN OREGON SPRING.

F. F. VICTOR.

How I should like to write to you, sweet Spring,
A lovely little song about the birds,
And the dear, early flowers; but then the thing
Is done so often, that I fear no words
Could be selected, that would not seem stale.
To one so used to praise, and you'll excuse
My dressing up a three times thrice told tale
In the poor speech of my ungraceful muse.

We will therefore dispense with flights of fancy and confine ourselves to facts. An Oregon Spring is apt to be showery. There is such an overplus of moisture in the earth that when the warm sun begins a rapid evaporation, the work has to be done over and over again; for no sooner does the invisible vapor get "sky-high," than a

cool current of air comes down from the mountains and condensing it at a touch, precipitates the same moisture upon us that we vainly fancied had been gotten rid of. And so we have flying showers in plenty, and every now and then a genuine pouring rain.

Humanity grows rather tired, sometimes, of this sort of thing. But the earth enjoys it. If you do not believe it, come with me to the woods, and I will prove it to you—aye, even now, in March. The turf in the flat or hollow places is soaked with water, like a sponge, and if you do not step carefully you will press it out over your shoe-tops; but by dint of quick eyes

and agile movement, you will escape any serious mishaps. Climbing over logs, jumping weather ditches, and crossing creeks, furnishes the necessary excitement and exercise by which you keep off a chill; for if you were to sit down to Summer reveries at this time of year, the doctor would be in requisition directly.

Here we are at last, at the very foot of the mountain; and what does this forest recess furnish us? What magnificent great trees! Fir, cedar, and here and there along this little creek, a yew, a maple, or an alder. Hardly a ray of sunshine ever penetrates this green and purple gloom. Spring and Fall, Winter and Summer are

much the same here—a difference only of water. In Summer the creek is within bounds, and you can lie on the mosses, if you feel disposed. What! lie on the mosses? every one of which seems such a marvel of beauty! What a wonderful—what a charming spot! I never, in all my life—!"

No, of course you never saw anything like it. This is the only country out of the tropics where vegetation has such a remarkable growth. Here are a dozen kinds of elegant green mosses in a group, to say nothing of the tiny gray, and brown and yellow varieties with which we have always been familiar, besides lichens innumerable.