

WASHINGTON COUNTY AND ITS TOWNS.

BY W. D. LYMAN.

While the "Argonauts of forty-nine" were upheaving the crust of California to find what "golden fleeces" nature might have already clipped and hid away, a few stragglers along the northern edge of the host of emigration had reversed the process, planting their gold in the fertile soil of the Willamette valley; and then waiting in patience for nature with her subtle alchemy of sun and rain to draw a hundred fold yield of the yellowest gold up the wheat stalks and through the apple twigs.

The old Oregonians wisely concluded that nature's fingers were surer than a miner's pick-ax. They observed that if they were going to draw any very regular instalments from the Bank of the Earth, they must make some preparatory deposits. Among the gold-diggers, were unbridled hopes, fierce but vacillating energies, and then, in most cases, bitter disappointment. Though some few would break into a grotto where a whole family of nuggets might be hiding, yet many more would be simply scooping out a bed for themselves where all the golden fleeces of the Sierras could not warm them. On the other hand, among the more sluggish founders of the Webfoot state, the principle of serene, systematic work has always prevailed. The feverishness which has devastated most parts of this coast, has never raged on the plains of the Tualitan.

Washington county, being nearest the sea-board of any of the important grain-raising counties of the State, can claim some of its oldest settlements. Nearly forty years have elapsed since the first daring explorers penetrated the jungles westward of the Willamette, and set their stakes on the unplowed gardens which lie along the four tributaries of the Tualitan. For years, the towns were scarcely more than post offices and blacksmith shops. Until ten or twelve years ago, this county presented the curious phenomenon of an old and staid community which yet had hardly a single native citizen of adult age. Remote from the great conflicts of time and place, it jogged upon its "godly race, nor ere had changed nor wished to change its pace."

But the period of daily mails and then of railroads and then of telegraphs, and then a new population from the bustling interior, has waked the slumbering energies of our plains and forests.

The locomotives that are now snorting a little further south each day, can see the wheat sacks crawling down from the hills where a few years ago enterprising forests of oaks were starting colonies, and can see the onions, and beets, and potatoes popping up out of ancient duck swamps.

The traveler from Portland will not find the Western Oregon trains to move so fast that he can not observe the woods which lie between Portland and Beaverton. Here is the first of Washington county's cities. A fragrance more powerful, though perhaps not more entrancing, than all the perfumes of Araby, meets the visitor from afar. *Onions!* Perhaps the beavers of other generations did not realize to what use their patient labors were going to be put. Let us hope that they did not. Yet they did their work right royally. A strip of land several miles long, several hundred yards in width, and, at some points, twenty or more feet thick, is their monument. A more beneficent one than that of the Pharaohs, since this is bequeathed to the needs, that simply to the wonder of men. This soil is so rich that grain can not be kept upright, and hence is almost always wasted. But for vegetables, it can not be surpassed. Beaverton lies just between this beaverdam and a pine forest. The cold stiff soil of the latter has not encouraged clearing to much extent, and the town, which has a population of a hundred or more, depends for its prosperity almost entirely upon the products of the former.

But our train has got through *gassing* at Beaverton post office, and so we may rest while trundling through the woods to Reedville. This place may be described as a kind of figure-head to the fine farm which adjoins it. This may be called a *capital* farm. As regards stock it is superior to any in the county. The thanks of the county are certainly due to Mr. Reed and his energetic managers for their introduction here of really first-class stock. It has stimulated to a great degree the ambition of the owners of the clumsy, spavined Cayuses which have infested this

county, to go and do likewise. The town of Reedville needs no very extended description. It is partially concealed from view by piles of wood. Woods again! There really is more timber here than seems necessary. Yet children are no doubt now living who will see scarcely a tree on all this plain.

Hillsboro next claims our attention. The county-seat, the residence of the sole newspaper of the county, the seat of an oat-meal mill, whose name and fame have overleaped the boundaries of this State and have even meliorated the condition of our coarse-grained neighbors of adjoining territories.

Hillsboro is visible from the railroad. Indeed the same remark may be extended to almost all the towns of the county. In accordance with the enlightened policy which controlled the location of depots, the old towns of the county were not intended to be immediately visible, but to occupy the background of the scene. Hillsboro is, however, slowly crawling down toward the depot, and the jungle that adjoins the latter is rapidly disappearing. The sources of Hillsboro's importance are visible in the plowings and harrowings of spring, audible in the buzzing threshers of summer, and calculable in the warehouses of fall. The neat courthouse in the western end of the town can be seen from all directions on the flat plain which surrounds the town.

Three miles westward across this plain, broken midway by the muddy flow of Dairy creek, brings us to Cornelius. This place, occupying a site originally designed for a wheat field, finds itself engaged in a hard battle against destiny. The trains stop here a length of time, apparently in inverse ratio to the importance of the place. However, there is a very large warehouse at this place and the cleaning apparatus lately introduced by the proprietors has secured an unusual amount of storage.

The beautiful plain of Gales creek now expands before us and on its western verge a white steeple may be seen, cut against the dark tint of the encroaching evergreens. Beside the spire a white line indicates the presence of a flag-staff, from which a flag is never known to float. North and south and in front of the spire, white cottages mingle with the growth of native oak.

Such is the pleasant sight of Forest