

unsold, and with the constant assurance that even if vessels could be induced to come here to load wheat, no abatement of tonnage charges could be hoped for. Such was the situation, with the expectation that any deficiency in the American crop would be fully compensated for by enormous yields in Europe.

"It is always darkest just before day." While our farmers were deliberating what to do with their old stock of wheat, there comes suddenly a "boom" in the wheat market that sets every wheat grower on the qui vive with delighted anticipation. Wheat commences to rise. The Chicago ring opens its career of speculation. Wheat goes up suddenly twenty cents a cental from where it was a month ago, the gloom of low prices is dispelled, and the farmer is gladdened with the hope that while high freights may severely tax his profits, he can still receive something like a paying price for his grain—enough to make him good for holding it over from last year, and a fair profit for the present harvest. The ordinary reader scarcely realizes how important this improvement in the wheat market is to the wheat grower himself, and through him to the whole community. All are dependent upon the prosperity of the producer, and when he lacks means or is poorly paid, every trade, business or profession languishes in sympathy with his losses. He is the Atlas who carries the world on his back, and his golden harvests are the only El Dorado from which flows perennial wealth and prosperity.

And fortunately, at this opportune time, the Pacific Northwest is gathering one of the richest harvests ever known, even in this land of exuberant production. All Western Oregon and Washington know only good harvests and ample yield; Eastern Washington and Oregon have realized the fabulous epoch of production of which we so often hear. If we are not mistaken, grain there commands the highest figures ever realized, and that, too, with the heaviest surplus they have ever had to sell. So the promise of the present is a blessing to the whole district of the Columbia, and we can reasonably expect to see a golden stream of coin pass into the interior as the cargoes and carloads of golden wheat come down to seek a market.

Prosperity of substantial, but not extravagant degree, seems about to relieve the toiling people of the weight of care they have lately known, and the pulse of commerce will throb in strong unison with the relief of productive industry.

Some ask, "How much wheat shall we have to export?" Taking the stock held over, and adding to that amount the surplus of 1881 from eastern fields and this valley, and the total must considerably overgo 300,000 tons, or 10,000,000 bushels; and if it nets the farmer 80 cents on an average, the total will be eight millions of dollars paid to the people.

Others ask, "Will prices of wheat hold up, and can tonnage be had at present figures?" No man can tell the future of the wheat markets of the world, more than he can tell the wind, "whence it cometh or whither it goeth;" but the present rise indicates a thorough belief on the part of those who ought to know, because they stake their fortunes as buyers on their opinions, that the world's supply will not be an overplus, and that this supply must be well husbanded. Wheat may fluctuate for awhile, but can hardly fail to bear a good price through the season; and as to the supply of tonnage, the present ruling rates will be apt to bring a great fleet here during the coming Winter. And as to its future price, the conduct of the farmer will chiefly decide that; for if he sells for a fair price only, and is not easily scared when speculators "bear" the market, he can do much to hold tonnage in check.

We shall see what the result of all will be as the season passes on, for, of course, there is no one who can safely predict what a few months will bring about in this connection.

While wheat is our chief staple, it must not be supposed that the Pacific Northwest has no other dependence; and this leads us to look at the sum of products for the present year. The single item of fisheries on the Columbia brings an immense sum of money into circulation, when we consider that the canneries and packing houses along the great river do a business that aggregates \$2,500,000 per annum, and that a great portion of this sum goes into general use as wages for labor and payment for building material and supplies.

It was estimated that 150,000 head of cattle were sold off of Eastern Oregon in a single year—1880. And here was another item that netted the stock men of the country two millions of dollars. Another great staple with us is wool; and when we reckon up the money paid for our 8,000,000 pounds of wool, at fancy figures—for our wool has a good name with manufacturers—we realize the value of an industry shared by 25,000 farmers, and which brings them in an income of two and a half millions. Take all the increase of stock into consideration, and we have another important source of wealth, for Oregon and Washington have heavy investments in all kinds of stock, and excel in horses. It will, perhaps, be news to strangers that our horses rank very high, and command the admiration of stock men who come among us. From the heaviest Clydesdale or Norman, down to the light limbed thoroughbred or speedy trotter, we can show good stock in any class, and our horses are driven abroad to supply other markets, as well as stock the working force of our railroads.

We ship much stuff to California besides wheat and wool. Our oats command a fancy price in California; our apples and pears go there through the Winter, and our dried apples, pears, plums and prunes are becoming staple articles of commerce. Our forests are sawed into lumber that finds a market in California, and even in China. Coal mines turn out "black diamonds" that warm the hearths of California as well as Oregon. Our own State has mines of precious metals that yield over a million dollars annually, and iron ore, within ten miles of Portland, is cast into pigs that commands an extra price in California, because it is a very superior metal. The single article of hops grown in the two States commands such a reputation that the growth of them has become a heavy business, and is annually increasing.

We are not endeavoring to particularize all the products of the Pacific Northwest in this brief sketch, but alluding to the most prominent, for the purpose of showing our many readers abroad how various our resources are, even though, in many respects, they are but partially developed. The era of progress and development is upon us; railroads are being constructed to all parts of the Columbian region; population and production have just begun to increase, and the future of this great region cannot fail to be magnificent.