

SOUTHWESTERN OREGON.

Difficulty of transportation and remoteness from the world's center has stood in the way of the development of all the Pacific Northwest for many years, and that is the reason why so great a portion of the Columbian region has remained so long unpeopled and uncultivated. The first settlements were on Clatsop, along the Columbia, and its tributaries, as the Cowlitz, and through the Willamette valley where navigation made the transportation of products possible. Beyond where steamboat navigation extended, as the interior mining regions offered a market for products, the wide interior was utilized as pasture lands for vast herds of stock; but the development of a well defined railroad system is extending population and converting bare bunch-grass ranges into productive regions, and as these extend the railroads are sure to follow until all the agricultural regions east of the Cascades shall be settled and cultivated.

The construction of the Oregon and California railroad points to important development in another direction. Southwestern Oregon has hitherto been so remote from ordinary travel and wanting in transportation facilities, that there has been little inducement for dense settlement and no motive for production, further than has been needed to supply the needs of mining camps scattered through the mountains. But the pushing of a railroad south to connect with the California railroad system will lead to the development of all the available agricultural lands in the valleys west of the Cascade range, and also in the settlement and cultivation of a great portion of Coos and Curry counties, that lie on the coast. It is of importance to understand the advantages possessed by this part of our country and the inducements for settlement and for this purpose a comparative view will best accomplish our object.

South of Roseburg there is not an extensive region of open country, except the Rogue River valley, which is already all occupied, though no doubt railroad connections will increase values of land, encourage its ownership in smaller bodies, double population and productions and so add greatly to its importance. But the greater portion of the country between the Sierras and

the ocean and south of the Willamette valley, is hilly and timbered and will require considerable labor to make it available for agriculture; while the agricultural areas east of the Sierras are generally open lands and easily reduced to cultivation; the emigrant who wishes to become a producer as soon as possible, naturally seeks these open eastern fields to commence work upon. So the comparison of these regions is necessary to enable the intending settler to judge where he had best pitch his tent and plant his vine and fig tree.

One great advantage of Southwestern Oregon, consists of its temperate climate, that is even more equable than that of the Willamette valley, and undoubtedly healthy. There are few extremes of heat or cold, and along the coast the winters are delightful as well as the summers. If the road deflects from Roseburg towards the coast it will bring that region into immediate demand, and whichever way the main track may take, a system of branch roads will be required to develop the country and feed the main line so the development of all this region is a question of but a short time. Along the coast there are stock ranges that utilize the best portions of the coast range and when transportation facilities give value to these lands we may look for small farms to be opened in all directions. The delightful climate will be our irresistible attraction. Production will take every shape that can promise success but will not be apt to result in swelling our grain surplus so much as in grass, fruit and vegetables.

Of course, cattle, sheep and horses will increase and wool will become an extensive export. With a route open to San Francisco that place will furnish a probable market for much if not all of the products of Southern Oregon. This hill country will abound in orchards and vineyards, for the climate will favor many varieties of fruit and grapes that do not succeed in this vicinity. The peach crop of Jackson and Josephine counties the past year was very prolific and their grapes were as luscious as abundant. The making of wine and raisins should become a source of constant income for the southern country, and they can also produce in perfection whatever other fruits can be grown to the north. Vegetables from Umpqua already reach the markets of

the Willamette Valley towns before they ripen here, and they can be brought still earlier from Rogue River Valley, when the road is built that far. Canned and dried fruits in immense quantity should be exported from this part of the State, as soon as orchards can be planted and made to bear.

It is not easy to predict what the agricultural future of the southern and western counties of Oregon can become without a full comprehension of the lands that can be made available for cultivation, and that is a question that only time can solve. The roughest hill region this side of Jacksonville has the richest possible soil, and can be made profitable for many purposes. Much depends on the inducements that time will offer. The great states of New York and Pennsylvania have many thickly settled and well developed counties that in a state of nature were forbidding, but have been made valuable, and those regions had no such equable and delightful climate as that of Southwestern Oregon, which, indeed, excels in climate and many natural facilities, most portions of the Pacific Coast. Compared with eastern Oregon that section excels not only in climate, but abundance of wood and water are found everywhere and delightful home spots can be selected, sheltered from storms and with natural attractions that a life-time could hardly procure.

Viewing the construction of the railroad through to California as a certainty within two years, we may expect to see wonderful changes occur in the country it will pass through. A glance shows the possession of unlimited water powers, grand forests, rich soil, wide pastures, many gold mining fields, extensive coal fields and numerous good harbors. Put a railroad through this region and all these things will be stimulated into activity and increased productions will result. The fisheries of those streams will be made the most of. Mines that are now valueless will be worked. Lands that are now idle can be cropped. A change will pass over the whole face of nature, and where a sleep of ages was on the land, life and effort will make it up to higher objects and aims, and such production as we have not dreamed of under the old order of things, when there has been no inducement for outlay or energy because the products could not safely exceed the wants. Bring the world to the doors of southern Oregon farms and prospectors and the results will be a miracle of progress.