

BEFORE AND AFTER.

Is it not strange that it should be difficult at this time to convince the inexperienced farmer that railroads are a positive benefit to him. By inexperienced, we mean one who has not enjoyed the benefits which we propose to point out. The effect upon a new country of the construction of railroads, although generally admitted, is denied by a few whose time is not taken up sufficiently with their own business to prevent their attending to that of others. Iowa, one of the most prosperous states in the Union, contains proportionately a greater number of railroads than many whose people have discouraged railroad construction. Iowa is free from debt. This freedom from the clutch of that terrible power, was not secured by excessive taxation, for aside from the rate being very low, values have been greatly enhanced in all things that have been produced from the soil. This state of things does not exist to the cost of the poor man, for the reason, that by exchange of commodities—which could only take place with ample transportation facilities, the price of the thing produced generally exceeds the thing consumed. Iowa is essentially a railroad state. There is hardly a county in the state that is not traversed by one or more railroads. The people do not merely exist. They live in enjoyment. They have maintained no destroying antagonism between the soil of their farms and the iron of the railroad. They produce, and the railway finds the market. They purchase, and the railroad delivers to them from the market, and the difference which they gain in the transfer is the profit on their labor, to which is added still another profit growing out of the transportation facilities they had in previous years encouraged and drew to their very doors. The cry against railroad grants is no longer heard in Iowa, and yet, with the exception of less than one sixth, the whole state was in its infancy literally blanketed by railroad grant. Illinois is another illustration of the good influence of railroads. Before the advent of railroads in that state, owing to poor and yet expensive transportation to and from the interior, corn sold from 12 to 18 cents; wheat, 30 to 45 cents; oats, 10 to 15 cents; pork, from 1½ to 2½ cents,—trade prices. By trade prices we mean—not cash, but trade in store goods, brought to the state by teams, oxen, or vessels, after a multitude of handlings, and for which the farmer paid 100 per cent. more than the New York or Philadelphia prices. Under the condition of things this could not be avoided. After the railroads were built and many of them were land grant roads—the cost of goods became less, much to the discomfiture of merchants with large stocks. New merchants could undersell them because of reduced freights. Buyers of produce could pay better prices, because it cost so much less to get the thing bought out of the interior, to market; as a result, tea, sugar, clothing, books, furniture and everything the farmer needed and could not grow, became less in price, while everything he produced and did not need—being a surplus—went up. The instrumentality of this—his farm, his labor and everything that was *his*, became more valuable. Farms went from \$4.50 to \$15 per acre; produce brought cash. Corn sold at from 22 to 37 cents; wheat, 45 to 80 cents; oats, 15 to 30 cents; pork 2¼ to 4¼ cents, and farm labor went from \$14 to \$18 per month. This latter rate the farmers paid willingly, for aside from knowing that their own labor had advanced, the prices re-

ceived made it easy. When the war came, the government drew heavily upon the means of transportation, and corn, etc., dropped to 10 cents, while labor maintained a high rate, simply because it became scarce—because the laborers had "gone to the war." After the war, prices of produce—up to 1873—when the panic came—were good; corn averaged 25 to 45 cts.; wheat, 75 cts. to \$1; beef and pork, 4 to 6 cents; while farm lands, improved, in 1880, were valued at from \$30 to \$50 an acre. The railroad in the states mentioned, not only gave the farmer a market to buy in at cheaper rates than before, but it gave him a market to sell in at better rates than without. His advantage over the anti-railroad farmer is not confined to his mere personal needs, but by its means he can secure farm machinery—greatly decreasing his costs of producing—at much less cost than his antagonistic brother. He began with small means and each year he gathers improvements, small in number at first. His orchard takes the place of bare land, a comfortable house takes the place of his log cabin or box, a buggy takes the place of his heavy wagon, a fair day's labor takes the place of a long weary drag and plod from gray morning until the midnight crow of the cock—all from the soil, all above a mere existence, quickened, enriched, smoothed and made enjoyable by the means of transportation offered by the railroad. Now look at the old way, before railroads were built. All was waste, work, weary and wrong. Wheat was hauled a hundred and fifty miles when it did not pay to haul more than 25 or 30. It took so much time and toil to do one thing that the farmer had no time or energy for another. He never finished. He was always behind. Worms, bugs, gophers and crows destroyed his labor. Frosts came before he was ready. Floods washed away his fences. The sun burnt his crops. Rain came too early or too late. When a good crop and fair prices did reach him, his wagon axles were broken, or the roads were miry beyond a possibility of travel. The buyer could not reach him and he could not reach the buyer, a hundred miles away. His sons became disgusted at the sight of wheat, or corn, or potatoes or hogs. His horny hands and rheumatic feet and quick asthmatic breath and bible back arose like evil geni for the future of his sons, and they hurried to the cities to become grocery and dry goods clerks, leaving the old man in the lurch, and in the breast of their mother a mixture of false pride and loneliness—all before the railroad was built.

All that is true of Iowa and Illinois, and other states without a railroad, and all that is true of Iowa, Illinois and other states with thousands of miles of railroads, is applicable to the Pacific Northwest. Remember that Iowa and Illinois had their Mississippi river, their Missouri river and the Great Lakes, all of which afforded a certain amount of transportation; but it was not until the railroads penetrated the interiors and connected with the lakes and rivers, that their great prosperity set in. So it is, and so it will be with the Pacific Northwest, with its great variety of soil—as good as the best in the United States—with its unrivaled Sound, its grand Columbia, its Snake, its Willamette and other navigable rivers, to all these must be added the rail, the locomotive and the car, before our transportation facilities will fill the measure of our need. It is a crime to stand in the way of such means to an end, and the man who

does raise his embittered voice is an enemy to life and a stranger to all that is worth living for. Go back but a few years to the time when a sack of wheat was handled fourteen times between the producer in the Walla Walla valley and the shipping merchant in Portland, and compare it with the convenience and cost of transportation of today—when we have a continuous railroad line!

We have heard men say that they did much towards developing the Pacific Northwest. We can assure all such that the development of this country has just about begun. When railroads run over it so thickly that on the map of the United States the Pacific Northwest looks like a spider web, it will be time enough to talk about the country being developed.

Before we let go of this subject we want to talk a little to the farmers showing how this development may or may not reach this country. In the first place, every man who comes to Oregon or Washington or Idaho must, if he has any feeling against railroads, wash it out. It don't make a particle of difference whether the state he came from was cursed by monopolies or not. There are none such here in the transportation business. Then we want to tell him that he must go into partnership with the railroads—each and every one of them. He must raise all the wheat, oats, barley and flax he can. He must raise sheep and wool, cattle and beef, vegetables and fruit; out of these products he must make all he possibly can. If the prices are low, he can hold until they are better. The railroad won't grumble because he isn't giving it any freight. If wheat is worth 45 cents on his farm and he isn't satisfied with fifteen cents profit he can wait until it goes up to 65, and the railroad won't ask him to pay one cent more freight than if he had sold at the low figure—at 15 cents profit. The farmer will get the benefit of the rise—not the railroad company although their cars may have been standing idle and their rail rusting. Now you could not afford to have that wheat hauled 30 miles by team, and yet the railroad will carry it swiftly and safely two thousand miles or more and return you a profit. Every well managed railroad prospers when you prosper. The interests of the farmer and the railroad are identical. They are as essential to you as your right hand. To build and equip the railroad to connect you with the market costs the railroad more than all your combined farms put together; and yet you add the profits of the farmers of any country together and those of the railroad connecting them with markets would be a mere cipher—nothing compared with the sum. Just look into this a moment and you will see that half of the anti-railroad people are cranks and the balance haven't brains enough to give force to the one idea that makes them notorious.

A. Finlayson, living in Klickitat county, W. T., sheared 15,000 sheep, the average being 10 pounds to the fleece. A Spanish Merino buck sheared 47 pounds, and the Champion buck, imported by Mr. G. W. Waldron, from the band of Mr. Hammond, of Vermont, produced the unprecedented amount of 55 pounds of wool this clip.

A farmer in Dungeness, Clallam county, W. T., has just threshed and measured 954 bushels of first class wheat from fourteen acres of land. Of these fourteen acres five averaged ninety-one bushels per acre.