

FROM ROSEBURG, OREGON TO YREKA, CALIFORNIA. THE UMPQUA AND ROGUE RIVER VALLEYS.

As the completion of the Oregon and California Railroad, from Roseburg in Oregon to Redding in California, is now a foregone conclusion, a brief sketch of the country through which it is to pass will doubtless be read with satisfaction.

Those of us who have suffered the agonies of a dozen or more trips by the overland stage line, have perhaps a more vivid conception of what is in store for "ye traveler," than he who has never braced against the bruises and tribulations of a night stage ride, over the Grave creek hills, across the Siakiyou mountains or down the Sacramento.

He who has gazed with interest, under such circumstances, upon the grandeur, beauty and diversity of the scenery along this route, may well anticipate the satisfaction he will feel when, reclining on the velvet cushions of a "Pullman palace coach," he is rushing over this self-same country at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour, and inhaling poetic inspiration from the most genial breezes that fan the face of Nature.

Having traversed the greater part of the Pacific slope, from Los Angeles to the Columbia river, and from the Pacific ocean to the Rocky mountains, I can safely assert that no where can be found so equable and pleasant a climate, such diversity of scenery and production, more richness of soil or beauty of landscape, than are to be seen on this route.

Roseburg, the county seat of Douglas county, is an enterprising town of nearly one thousand inhabitants. Until a few weeks ago it was the terminus of the O. & C. R. R. It is situated in the heart of the Umpqua valley on the east bank of the Umpqua river, two hundred miles south from the city of Portland.

It possesses many good buildings and has an extensive trade with the surrounding country. It is also the site of the U. S. Land Office for the Roseburg district, and aspired a few years ago to be made the head of navigation on the Umpqua river. To this end a congressional appropriation of twenty thousand dollars was secured and by dint of perseverance and outlay of money, muscle and steam, a steamboat was landed at its wharf. The event was hailed with joy by the people of the Umpqua valley. The experiment, however, was never repeated and Roseburg lapsed into its former state of isolation until the advent of the O. & C. R. R. aroused it from its lethargy, revived its spirits and infused new vigor into its varied resources. The temporary terminus of the railroad being fixed at Roseburg created a boom not only among the merchants there, but also among the farmers and wool growers of the valley, and gave to the town an extensive forwarding and commission business for points to the south.

The Umpqua valley is unlike any other that I have ever seen, and is in fact no valley at all, but an extensive plain bounded on all sides by lofty, timbered mountains and made up of a succession of vales and low half-wooded hills. Its climate is less humid than that of the Willamette valley and like the Rogue River, it is never subjected to the droughts, so frequent in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys of California. The ground is seldom frozen so as to interfere with the work of the farmer: and though some-

times whitened with snow it is rarely covered more than a few hours at a time. Frosts scarcely ever injure the crops and a great variety of fruits and vegetables grow to perfection.

Apples, pears, prunes, plums, apricots, peaches, berries and grapes, are produced in abundance and of the finest quality. This valley ships yearly great quantities of wheat, rye, oats and barley. The soil is remarkably productive, and with increased facilities for shipping and travel, it is destined to take rank among the most delightful spots on the Pacific coast. It is remarkably well watered and the timber is so well distributed that little seems needed to complete its adaptability for the farmer, while the hill ranges furnish an extensive pasturage for sheep, horses and cattle.

It is neither a timbered nor a prairie country, but a harmonious blending of the two, that adds as much to the beauty of the landscape as to the convenience of the husbandman. The timber consists of oak, ash, alder, maple, mountain mahogany, pine, fir and cedar, and supplies every demand for fuel, building or cabinet work. The North and South Umpqua are large streams, rising in the Cascade mountains and flowing in a westerly converging course, until, reaching the center of the valley, they join and thence flow west to the ocean—a broad, beautiful river, but unnavigable by reason of rapids between Roseburg and Scottsburg, the latter being at present the head of navigation, about thirty miles from the ocean. Innumerable other smaller streams flow through the valley, wending their tortuous course among the thousand hills, through the grassy glades and groves of oak, cooling the air, and giving vigor to vegetable and animal life. The denizens of the Umpqua have strong hopes of a railroad that will at no distant day connect them with the coast at Coos bay, sixty-five miles distant. The surrounding mountains are well stocked with a variety of game, among which may be found bear of the grizzly, black, brown and cinnamon species, deer, panthers, wildcats, and occasionally a band of elk.

The streams furnish mountain trout, and salmon are plentiful in the rivers at the seasons for their runs. The railroad survey follows the same general course as the Oregon and California stage line, varied somewhat, of course, as the face of the country demands it. Several thousand men are now at work, and the din consequent to railway construction in this age of steam, electricity and giant powder, wakes the echoes among solitudes hitherto silent since the beginning of the world. All rejoice at this progress of civilization, except perhaps the invincible stage driver, who sighs as he sees his occupation almost gone, and looks with a jealous eye upon the driver of the iron horse, who impels his "fiery untamed steed" with a rush, a roar and a deafening scream, over the route where for so many years he has held his half despotic sway and narrated his adventures with fiendish satisfaction to trembling, frightened novices in stage riding.

Leaving Roseburg we will now follow the old stage road southward. At the edge of the town we commence the ascent of a ridge, which crowds its rocky point into the river, forcing the sparkling stream further to the west. Reaching the summit of this ridge, we pause to view the landscape o'er. Roseburg nestles in its little cove at the foot of wooded hills, looking fresh, bright and cozy, beside its winding river. Pleasant cottages,

prosperous looking business houses, churches, schools, court house, and all that goes to make up a thrifty western county seat, with a laudible ambition to excel, is spread out to our view, and with its shade trees of oak, alder and maple, presents a pretty picture for our contemplation. Bordering either bank of the river, where the hills do not crowd too closely, are seen pleasant farm-houses and gardens, with oak and fir covered knobs and knolls for a back-ground. The bushes at the roadside tell of one of the chief occupations of the people, bearing as they do stolen fleeces of wool from the sheep that graze among them. Above this point and further south, the valley bordering the river spreads its arms further to the east and west, and furnishes broad farms of level ground and excellent soil. Our road follows the river, and as we traverse its crooked course new attractions are constantly presented. Now we are passing around a rocky point, the road a mere artificial shelf cut in the solid wall, with a mountain above and the roaring river below. Anon we have passed the point of danger, and the sharp crack of the driver's whip rings out on the morning air. We go flying over a fine level road, with fences, farms and orchards on either hand. Thus in and out, now skimming along the water's edge, lulled by its ripple, again at a giddy height on the hillside, with a beautiful prospect below, or stifled in the dust of some neighborhood lane, our journey is sufficiently varied to keep both ennui and Morpheus at a distance. Oak Grove, until recently the first stage station, is 16 miles from Roseburg. Four miles further on, we reach Myrtle Creek, a pleasant little burg, with a prosperous farming community around it. About eight miles south is Riddleburg, at the present time the terminus of the railroad. Nine miles from Myrtle Creek, by stage, we reach Canyonville, at the extreme south end of the Umpqua valley. This village constitutes the base of supplies for a fine farming country, stretching away for miles up and down the Umpqua river, which passes about two miles to the north and flows west by north. The railroad will cross the mountains through Crow creek canyon, about six miles west of Canyonville.

From Canyonville to the southward our route lies over a heavily timbered and mountainous country, until we reach Rogue River valley. We pass occasional settlements nestling at the foot of high mountains and half hid away beneath the shade of the ever-present forests of fir, cedar and pine. Many of these little vales and valleys possess all the attractions for which Switzerland is famous, except that which time and an industrious people alone can make. The people who dwell in these isolated nooks are necessarily frugal and industrious, and are fast making some of the most attractive homes to be found in the state, and only await the advent of the railroad to complete their comfort and conveniences. The soil in these little valleys is an accumulation of centuries, from the surrounding mountains, and is as productive as any that can be found anywhere. The climate is healthful and invigorating, and all that is needed for domestic use, except such articles as the latitude will not produce, is raised. Cow Creek, Wolf Creek, Grave Creek, Jump-off-Joe and Grant's Pass are successively the settlements passed after leaving Canyonville, and before we reach Rogue River valley, a distance of about seventy miles. These settlements are all small