

"TIME'S NOBLEST EMPIRE IS THE LAST."

It is a fruitful and a boundless theme. It was a master hand that marked the course of this mighty river, but that master hand was most lavish in its endowment of the region itself. In exhaustlessness and variety of resources no other country on the globe equals this of ours in the New Northwest. There is an atmosphere to coax to the fullest perfection all the various productions of the north temperate zone, to charm by its beauty and heal by its purity; here are valleys more extensive and fertile than the famed Danube or Nile; more bountiful deposits of gold and silver, iron and coal, copper and lead, than are found within equal limits in the world beside; its monarchs of the forest, its stupendous vegetable productions challenge the universe. In grand natural curiosities and wonders all other countries combined fall far below it. A few

PROMINENT CHARACTERISTICS

of the region aside from the water-courses already outlined, are the mountain ranges, the valleys and the plains. It is traversed north and south by the four or five greatest ranges of our country. First on the east the Rockies and Bitter Root, next the Blue, then the Cascade, and lastly the Coast range. In addition to these are more isolated mountain ranges whose trend is not generally so regular or well defined, such as the Salmon River, Sawtooth, Cœur d'Alene, Owyhee, Umpqua, etc. These mountains vary in altitude from 5,000 to 14,000 feet. It is on these and their numerous spurs that the forests are mainly found, and among them are grouped the many belts of precious and base metals. These mountains also give forth the myriad glittering springs and treasure up the vast reserves of snow and ice, which in summer send an unfailling and regular supply of water through thousands of rivulets, creeks and rivers to refresh and fertilize the lowlands.

Then are the valleys—the country's precious gems—one hundred or more of them ranging in length from 25 to 200 miles, and in breadth from two to fifty miles and thousands of others, smaller, but just as fertile and generally more attractive. Enchanting little valleys, coy parks hidden among the hills, these are indeed innumerable. Their altitude varies from a little above sea level to 5,000 feet. They are generally considerably depressed below the surrounding formation and are often well sheltered by over-looking mountain ranges.

The plains, more elevated than the valleys, stretch over a vast extent of the country east of the Cascade mountains. The Snake river plains, in the southern section of the region in question, are some 300 miles in length by 250 in breadth, possessing an elevation of from 2,500 to 4,500 feet above the sea, and in the main being only fit for grazing. The Great Plains of the Columbia, in the northern portion of the region, nearly equal the Snake river plains in extent, possess a much lower average elevation and afford the larg-

est unbroken body of agricultural lands west of our prairie states. Camas Prairie, in central Idaho, is twenty by eighty miles in extent. Horse Plains, in western Montana, is nearly as large. Teton Basin, in western Wyoming, 800 square miles in extent, and other similar plateaux, possess wide areas of productive farm lands at an elevation above the sea of from 3,000 to 6,000 feet.

OF ITS EXTENT AGAIN.

In this vast drainage of 400,000 square miles are 50,000,000 acres of wheat lands, capable of producing the enormous amount of 1,000,000,000 bushels of wheat annually, (or an equivalent) placing the yield at a low average for that region of twenty bushels per acre. This is about twenty times the production of the great state of Illinois in 1881. The region also possess some 60,000,000 acres of grazing lands, a larger territory than New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and New Hampshire combined. The possibilities of such a pasture field are almost beyond calculation. The forests of this vast domain are greater and more valuable than those in all of our states north of the Ohio river and east of the Mississippi. The mineral field underlies tens of thousands of square miles of the forest area. Gather together all there is of England, Scotland, Belgium, Holland, France, Denmark and Switzerland, where over 85,000,000 of people dwell, and it does not equal the water shed of the Columbia and its tributaries. And all those countries have their mountains and timber and their barren and waste lands and are growing, increasing and developing yet, and will continue for ages to come, notwithstanding heavy annual depletion from emigration.

To impress the reader still more forcibly with the size and destiny of our land "where rolls the Oregon," let me quote a recent comparison made by Hon. M. C. George, our Congressman: "Put your finger on a map northwest of Chicago, pass it thence easterly to include Detroit and Toledo and Cleveland and Buffalo and Montreal and Boston; thence follow down the coast and include New York and Brooklyn and Philadelphia and Baltimore, thence westerly and include Cincinnati and St. Louis; and then to Chicago again, and although you have outlined a scope of country which includes all the great cities of America save New Orleans and San Francisco, and an area where over 23,000,000 of people reside, yet you have traced a country only about seven-eighths the size of the great Northwest of the Pacific."

VACANT LANDS.

A while ago we heard one of the best posted land lawyers of Walla Walla make the rather astounding statement that one-half the arable area of this county remains unsettled and unclaimed. A glance at the map showed that he was correct. People have settled upon the favorite foothills and the best land of the valleys below the mountains and have neglected the great area of rolling hills between Dry creek and Snake river and the Columbia. So it remains true that

one-half the arable lands of Walla Walla county are unclaimed. Of late more attention is paid to this part of the country, and settlers are making locations. Absence of living water and difficulty in locating wells are the principal objections. No one need doubt the ability of the soil to produce crops. The fact is, settlers have chosen the most eligible locations, and with the wide world to choose from have passed over as good land as need be desired. The whole region possesses more value for production, if it can be supplied with water; and eventually it will not be so difficult as people imagine to locate wells. The land toward Snake river is high hills in part, and yet can be made to produce wheat. Coming up from Texas ferry you climb a great ridge and ride for miles over beautiful bunch grass prairies without seeing a habitation or mark of a plow. All along the Snake river to beyond the Tukannon, such seems to be the case. Good land can be found in the Blue Mountains that will be eagerly sought for in a few years from now. The northern part of Columbia county, and the southern part of Garfield county present many vacant places for settlers to select from. The Assotin county is not over one-half claimed, and from Alpawai canyon to Lewiston, in Garfield county, there is a great deal of vacant land near Snake river. The south side of Snake river is considered by some to be all taken up, but the fact is that this section yet offers homes—and good locations, too—for thousands of families.

Eastern Klickitat had not a single settler last spring, and has but a few now. For six miles east and west with average width of fifteen miles, that portion of country invites settlement. So far as appearances go that section possesses excellent soil and every advantage than can be desired is obtainable.

An enterprising German who works in the shops at Ainsworth, has taken land on the Columbia, near there and has made it produce wonderfully. It has not been supposed that that particular section was of any value as agricultural land, but it seems that good land lies along the Columbia above Ainsworth, and there is a strip of good country between it and the road north and south. The extent of good country exceeds all previous anticipations. The mate of the steamer "Billings" says a very desirable strip of agricultural land, twenty miles long and six miles back from the shores of Snake river, commences six miles from Ainsworth on the north side of that river. Only a few months ago no one supposed there was good land there, but it is claimed that this particular tract containing 75,000 acres, is superior soil.

The lower part of the Palouse country is almost entirely vacant. Take fifty townships of land there and not one-half the government land and not one-fourth the railroad land is yet occupied. All these specified tracts of land are in reasonably close proximity to Walla Walla, and we make the point that unoccupied territory capable of making homes for ten thousand families, of excellent soil, remains vacant within fifty miles of Walla Walla. That will help to appreciate the destiny that awaits our beautiful and enterprising city in the immediate future if we merit by enterprise results that are within our grasp.—*Walla Walla Statesman*.