

JACKSON COUNTY.

Its Great Agricultural and Mineral Resources.

ROGUE RIVER VALLEY THE HEART OF OREGON.

Fruit, Grain, Hay, Butter, Stock, Timber and Minerals.

Though a third of a century has rolled by since smoke first issued from the clay chimney of the settler's cabin in Rogue river valley, that region is but now being opened to the world by that great factor of modern progress, the railroad. The iron horse of commerce is rapidly approaching it from the north and the south, and before the birth of another year its forest-crowned hills will echo across the grain-carpeted valley the locomotive's shrill whistle. A new branch will be added to the tree of commerce; not a tender shoot but a stout limb of vigorous growth, one that will give more than it receives and strengthen the trunk to which it is united. Though to a degree isolated from its sister counties, communication maintained only by means of the stage and cumbersome freight wagon, cut off almost totally from an outside market for its products, the natural resources of Jackson county have been developed to a degree almost unknown and entirely unappreciated by those not familiar with its condition and history. The rude cabins have given place to comfortable and elegant residences, large and substantial barns have succeeded the thatched stables of the pioneer, well tilled fields and thrifty orchards attest the success of agriculture, manufacturing industries have sprung up, towns with houses, dwellings, population and trade that astonish the stranger have grown and flourish, farmers and business men have become wealthy, and all the indications of prosperity are observable on every hand. With such a beginning, what must be the result of an early connection with the trade centers of the world?

Jackson county lies in the extreme southern end of Oregon, bordering on the California line, and is hemmed in between the Cascade mountains on the east and those of the Coast Range on the west, the Rogue river mountains on the north and the Siskiyou on the south, all of which occupy a portion of the 2,800 square miles embraced within its territory. Surrounded by these mountain ranges is the thickly settled portion of the county, the beautiful Rogue river valley. The valley proper is about forty miles long by twenty wide, though sometimes the name is made to embrace the whole watershed of that turbulent stream. The mountains are heavily timbered and rich in minerals; the foothills afford splendid grazing for cattle and sheep, and their special adaptation to viticulture and the growth of certain kinds of fruit is now being recognized; the valley lands produce cereals, hay and vegetables in abundance, and the river bottoms fruit of unsurpassed excellence. In the diversity of its products and resources, Jackson county is superior to any in the state, and needs but the railroad advantages soon to be given to take a front rank in wealth and importance.

The beauty and probable fertility of Rogue river valley were freely commented upon for years

by the bands of American and English trappers that traversed it on their way between the Columbia and the trapping grounds of California, but owing to the fact that it was cut off from approach by sea and to the hostility of the Indian tribes of that region, no effort was made to occupy it until long after the settlements in the Willamette had become so numerous that the territory of Oregon was organized. The hostile and thieving character of the savages won for them the title of "Rogue Indians," and this name has descended to the valley, the river that drains this whole region and the mountains that border the stream toward the coast. The regular trail from the Willamette to the Sacramento led through this valley, and many a fatal encounter is recorded between the natives and bands of trappers and emigrants passing through. Under such circumstances there was small inducement for the emigrants to settle there with their families, when so much desirable land could be found in the Willamette valley, where a degree of safety was assured by the very extent of the settlements. The discovery of gold on Klamath river and its tributaries in 1850 and the great rush to those mines in the spring of 1851, led to the discovery, also, of rich diggings on the streams of Jackson and Josephine counties a few weeks later. Hostile Indians never protected a rich mining region from invasion by the irrepresable gold hunter. Miners flocked into the mountains bordering the valley on the west, and though they suffered frequently at the hands of the native proprietors, they not only were not driven away but increased in numbers. The town of Jacksonville sprang up and became the trade center, pack trains brought supplies from both Oregon and California, and the quiet wilderness awoke suddenly into life and activity. The great demand and high price for hay, vegetables and grain induced settlers to occupy the choice spots in the valley and along the streams, exposed to the wrath of the savages and suffering the other disadvantages of pioneer life. For the next six years a constant warfare was maintained. Travelers and pack-trains were ambushed, whole families massacred, bloody battles fought and worthless treaties made, ending in the extermination of a majority of the Indians and the complete removal of the remainder to a reservation many miles away.

Freed from this great drawback to its prosperity, Jackson county made rapid progress. Its mines were rich and supported a large population, drawing supplies of food chiefly from the farmers in the valley. The mutual support thus afforded by its two leading industries is the secret of the great prosperity of this region, a prosperity wrought within itself, substantial and permanent. The opportunity soon to be offered of shipping to other markets the surplus products, of which there will be an abundance as soon as the shipping facilities are provided, will be improved by the people now living here and the hundreds who will be led to make this their home, and the present prosperity and wealth will rapidly increase. Such is a brief resume of the past, and we will now consider the Jackson county of to-day.

CLIMATE.

In its climate this delightful region possesses the combined advantages of the various other sections of Oregon without the accompanying

drawbacks. It enjoys the warmth of summer and the frosts of winter known in Eastern Oregon without the extremes there experienced. With a rainfall ample enough for all the purposes of agriculture it escapes the continual rains of the Willamette valley in winter, and receives but occasional refreshing showers in summer, the annual rainfall varying from twenty to forty inches and averaging about twenty-five. The extreme limit of the thermometer in summer is 100°, though it seldom exceeds 90°, while in winter it seldom sinks as low as 10°, the average for the winter months being about 40° and in summer about 70°. Snow falls occasionally to the depth of three or four inches but rapidly disappears, while ice never exceeds two inches in thickness and forms but a few times during the season. In the mountains, of course, there are more snow and ice, and upon this fact the miners rely for a supply of water for their business. It will thus be seen that in both valley and mountain nature has provided just the climatic conditions required by the two great industries of the county, agriculture and mining. To the eastern man especially, who desires in summer a warm climate without the excessive heat of his native state, and in winter a clear, bracing atmosphere unaccompanied by extreme cold and exemption from continuous snow or rain, Rogue river valley presents attractions peculiarly inviting. It is beyond question the Paradise of Oregon.

AGRICULTURE.

The market for the valley's products has hitherto been necessarily local and limited, though more extensive than one would at first suppose. The stage companies and teamsters have consumed large quantities of hay and grain, while the flour, vegetables and fruit of Jackson, Josephine, Curry, Del Norte, Klamath and Lake counties have been largely supplied from this region. Beyond what was necessary to supply this demand, however, has not been produced, and it can truly be said that the capabilities of the valley for extensive agriculture have never been fully tested. The arable land embraces about one-fifth of the entire area of the county, including foothills, plains and river bottoms. The foothills possess that rich soil to be found on all the hilly lands of Western Oregon, while the plains have much adobe land and the bottoms are composed of the most fertile alluvium. In the valley wheat, oats, barley, corn, potatoes, hay, etc., yield abundantly, and anything less than a half crop has never been experienced during the thirty years of cultivation. Twenty bushels of wheat to the acre are considered a very unsatisfactory crop, while as high as sixty bushels have been realized. Barley and oats produce proportionately well, and potatoes and corn are of especial excellence and yield abundant crops, the former contrasting favorably in quantity and quality with the inferior tubers of California. The facilities now afforded for shipment to other markets will no doubt serve to largely increase the crop of cereals in the future.

LIVE STOCK.

The foothills of Jackson county furnish grazing for sheep of the finest quality, and the best strains of fine Merinos have been introduced into the county. So much attention has been paid to improving the sheep of this region that Southern Oregon wool is rated higher in the market than