

## SNAKE RIVER VALLEY.

As early as 1871 Professor Hayden, of the United States geological survey, spoke in his reports of South-eastern Idaho as being one of the most attractive regions along the whole length of the Rocky Mountains. He found the rugged heights whence flow the fountain streams of Snake River, full of interest to the geologist, and offering a wide and promising field for the prospector and a rich soil for the agriculturist. Since that time many settlers have gone into the great valley of Snake River, miners have located claims along the stream, and prospectors have entered the mountains in search of the rich ledges that the float quartz indicates. Snake River runs for many miles through a valley which varies in width from ten to twenty miles, passing in its course over three magnificent falls—American, Shoshone and Salmon—and presenting in them and its canyons scenery the most beautiful and inspiring. The Shoshone Falls (described and illustrated in *THE WEST SHORE* for July) are among the great aquatic wonders of the world, and are reached by the Oregon Short Line to Shoshone Junction, where a stage line will carry the tourist the few miles from that point to the river. Accommodations are being prepared for visitors on an extensive scale at the falls, and in the early summer a throng of tourists will view the awe-inspiring cataract, the beautiful little islands, the rapids, cascades and the weird scenery of the canyon above and below. A tourist recently wrote: "I have spent many days around Niagara and seen other great falls, but have never seen anything that possesses so much beauty, so many varied subjects of interest which may be so easily seen and enjoyed, as the few miles of Snake River which we have been exploring."

## AGRICULTURE.

The agricultural capacity of the great valley of Snake River is enormous. Professor Hayden spoke most flatteringly of the future of the country in this respect, and described the soil as composed of a rich, sandy loam, which needs but the addition of water to render it most excellent farming land. As to the means for supplying this necessary element, he says: "The valley stands at a very moderate height above the ordinary water level of the river." The average width of the stream at low water season is "about 140 yards, and the average volume of water it sends down probably three feet deep by 400 feet wide, running at the rate of four feet per second. This amount of water will irrigate nearly 1,000 square miles of land sufficiently for ordinary crops." That his opinion was sound is evidenced by the operations of the Snake River Water Company, which has constructed an immense canal, beginning where the river emerges from the mountains, and conveying water by the main canal and its lateral branches over the whole valley for a distance of thirty miles. The amount of water available for the canal is limited only by the quantity running in the stream, and unless Snake River dries up the source of supply will be never-failing. The fact is the great canal system has only been fairly started, and yet the progress

made has attracted many settlers, though so extensive is the valley that even along the great ditch it is as yet but sparsely settled. As new locations are made more water is required, and other canals are being located. In a few years upper Snake River valley for a distance of fifty miles will be one continuous succession of cultivated fields, meadows and gardens, sustained and invigorated by the life-giving fluid flowing through the hundreds of little veins from the great heart of Snake River. Rarely does nature offer such facilities for irrigating a large district of country at so little cost. The fields are so level that small ditches can be run in any direction at a nominal expense. The surplus water, after passing through its devious channels, finds its way into the river again, where it is available for ditches taken out further down the stream. Two companies are at work at Blackfoot upon a system of canals starting at that point.

All the cereals produce abundantly, wheat yielding from thirty to fifty bushels per acre and oats a third more. Vegetables and all root crops are prolific, especially potatoes, which, in quantity of yield and quality, are unexcelled in the world. A sack of these tubers was sent East last year, the potatoes weighing an average of three pounds each. The market for all products is active and permanent, the demand created by the mining interests being greater than the home supply, so that Utah has been largely called upon for products that could be raised with profit in this valley. The great increase in the mining population sure to follow the improved methods lately introduced will greatly increase the demand, and a certain market awaits the farmer. Thousands of acres of Government land within the scope of this great canal system are open to the occupation of any who may be qualified to take up land under the liberal laws of the United States. The advantages of irrigation have been so often pointed out in *THE WEST SHORE* that they need not here be adverted to. They are recognized by all men who have studied the subject.

The stock interests of this region are considerable. Large numbers of cattle have been driven from Oregon during the past season and added to the bands already grazing upon the extensive ranges among the hills bordering the valley. Professor Hayden says of these grass-covered hills: "While gazing on the endless succession of smooth, grassy ridges and hills piled and rolled together to form a large ridge, distance giving the grassy covering the appearance of velvet or silk, the colors of the folds varying as if by the difference in reflection of the light, the resemblance to the folds of rich cloth is more than simple fancy." In winter, when the valley is covered with a white mantle of snow, these hills are drifted bare by the wind, and cattle are thus able to reach the tufts of bunch grass and sustain themselves by grazing upon this natural hay, until, in the spring, in a good, thrifty condition, they seek the greener grass of the valley. Provident ranchmen are accustomed to provide hay to carry stock through those occasional seasons when the grass is for a time covered too deeply by snow. Horses require less attention than cattle or sheep in this respect, as they can