

western portion of the county are Philomath, which possesses a college of the same name, and Monroe, both of them thriving communities.

The railroad so often alluded to is the one now being constructed by the Oregon Pacific Railroad Company. According to the announced intentions of this company, it will at once construct a continuous line of railway from deep water on Yaquina Bay across the Willamette Valley, Cascade Mountains and Blue Mountains to a connection with the Oregon Short Line, thus rendering Yaquina Bay the ocean terminus of a complete transcontinental road. Work has progressed slowly for several years, but the present season, all financial matters having been satisfactorily arranged, it has been pushed with great vigor. There are now 3,000 men at work on the line, and the road will be completed from Yaquina to Corvallis by the middle of October. Much tunneling and heavy cut work has been necessary in the mountains, and thousands of feet of expensive trestlework have been required, making the cost of construction great and the progress slow. The line is standard gauge and is being laid with steel rails. The distance from Corvallis to Yaquina is seventy-two miles, in which eight stations have been established. The extreme grade is but 100 feet to the mile, and only four or five miles of that, and the greatest curve does not exceed ten per cent. The company has six locomotives already on the line and 500 cars under construction at Yaquina. The passenger coaches were shipped in sections from the East and set up here. In the shops 130 men are employed.

The managers of the enterprise state positively that work will be promptly commenced on the line east of Corvallis, and that it is already located as far as Albany. Its completion will certainly be of vast benefit to Oregon. The projected route traverses the magnificent timber regions of the Cascades Mountains, as yet untouched by the ax, and crosses that vast country lying between the Cascades and Blue mountains, whose value for agricultural purpose is just becoming known. The soil of that great basin, so often represented on the maps as a desert, is extremely fertile, and with irrigation to supply the lack of sufficient rain can be rendered highly productive. Water for irrigating purposes is abundant and so situated that practical irrigation can be had on an extensive scale. This has been, and is now, the great stock region of Oregon. The importance of opening up this valuable country by railroad cannot be overestimated, and there is no greater enterprise now in progress in the State.

The proposed method of improving the harbor entrance at Yaquina Bay, to render it a suitable terminus for such a road and overland route, has been described. When this is accomplished it will, in addition to its advantages spoken of, offer the quickest and most agreeable route of travel between San Francisco and Portland, saving several hours over the present one down the Columbia River. The company owns a fine steamer, the *Yaquina*, a craft of 2,100 tons, with a draught of twelve feet. She has large freight capacity and accommodations for eighty first class and sixty second class passengers,

and is rated A1 at Llyod's. Her staterooms are nicely fitted up and contain only two berths.

The officers of the company under whose energetic management and personal supervision the work is being done are: President, T. Edgerton Hogg, of New York; First Vice-President and General Manager, William M. Hoag, Corvallis, Or.; Second Vice-President, Wallis Nash, Corvallis, Or.; Third Vice-President and Secretary, Norman S. Beatty, New York; Treasurer, Colonel G. T. M. Davis, New York. These gentlemen have demonstrated by their success the possession of ability to manage this great enterprise, and their past and present achievements are a guarantee that their announced plans for the future will be carried to completion with all possible dispatch.

THE BANYAN TREE.

ONE of the most remarkable trees belonging to the genus *Ficus*—the 600 species of which comprise climbing shrubs and trees of great diversity of character—is the famous banyan, whose extraordinary habit of growth and enormous proportions so much astonish those whose idea of a large tree has been formed from what we consider giant forest trees. The banyan, whose spreading, bowery roof, beneath which whole villages of huts find shade and shelter, is supported by gigantic pillar-like props, formed by descending aerial roots, which, on reaching the ground, assume the appearance and perform the functions of separate trunks. This tree in many parts of India is held sacred by the natives. Deep twilight always prevails under the shade of the spreading foliage, through which not a ray of bright light can pierce, and the awe and dread with which the Buddhist villagers regard this sacred tree is very intelligible. In the Wood Museum at Kew, England, there is a fine specimen of a palm trunk, upon which the strangling growth of a banyan's roots is well shown. The remarkable way in which the roots become united to each other at every point where they touch is observable in the specimen just named.

A PETRIFIED FOREST.

THERE is a wonderful petrified forest at Corrizo, New Mexico. Petrified stumps, limbs and, in fact, whole trees, lie about on all sides. The action of the waters for hundreds of years has gradually washed away the high hills round about, and the trees that once covered the high table lands now lie in the valley beneath. Immense trunks, some of which will measure five feet in diameter, are broken and scattered over a surface of three hundred acres. Limbs and twigs cover the sand in every direction. There are numerous blocks or trunks of this petrified wood that have the appearance of having been just cut down by the woodman's ax, and the chips are thrown around on the ground so that one instinctively picks them up as he would in the logging camps of Puget Sound. Every color of the rainbow is duplicated in the crystals, and those of an amethyst color would pass the eye of a novice for genuine stone.