

GLIMPSES OF WILLAMETTE VALLEY.

PROBABLY no better or more satisfactory bird's-eye glance at the flower of the Willamette Valley can be obtained than is afforded by a good view from the summit of Mary's Peak, or "June Peak," as it is called. Snow, which falls to a great depth during the long winter months on the summit of this peak, generally disappears some time in June, and hence the origin of the name "June Peak." Mary's Peak is located in Benton County, about eighteen miles almost due west of Corvallis. Without doubt it is the highest mountain along the entire length of the Coast Range. One bright, lovely morning, early in August, a party of four, including the writer, left the lively town of Corvallis, fully equipped for the excursion to the summit, and turned their faces to the west.

Two hours' leisure riding brought us to the lower end of Little Mary's River Valley, or "Greasy," as it is known in slang parlance among the early settlers of that region. Here we diverged from the main route of travel and entered the foothills, which lead by somewhat abrupt gradations to the main Coast Range. From that time on, until the base of the mountain was reached, our progress was slow and toilsome. The party moved forward very deliberately, now winding around the base of a sharp projecting spur, climbing along the steep side of a hill, riding "single file" as we followed the narrow trail through dense forests and tangled thickets, or, again, plunging with cautious steps down a deep, rugged canyon, gloomy in morning shadows, and still damp with the undried dews of night.

About two o'clock the base of the peak was reached. Before commencing the wearisome ascent the party halted and discussed, with hearty relish, an excellent lunch. Shortly before three o'clock we started up the steep trail that led a zig-zag course along the side of the peak. Full three hours were consumed in reaching the summit, as we moved very slowly under the sweltering afternoon sun, and paused at short intervals to allow our jaded horses an opportunity of recovering their wind. It was late in the afternoon before we cleared the thick belt of timber and entered the small prairie that crowned the extreme summit. Pausing for a few minutes the party rested, and then commenced a tour of observation, determined to utilize the brief interval of day that remained.

Evening was moving rapidly apace. Already the sun was low down near the horizon, and the sky was glowing with roseate tints. Large shadows were creeping across the summit and stretching far down the mountain's side. Within less than an hour summer twilight would gently wrap the mountains and valleys.

A few minutes' walk brought the party to the highest point of the peak. This spot was found at the extreme southeastern point of the mountain. Here was a long ledge of rock, which overhung the precipitous side of the peak. Several small, stunted spruce trees grew out from the fissures of the ledge, their roots clinging to the rugged sides, and drawing from the sterile and reluctant soil a meager life. The topmost branches of these dwarf

trees rose only a few feet above the edge of the projecting rocks. Those standing there could easily look over their ragged trunks and obtain an unobstructed view of the broad panorama of landscape below and beyond.

Standing thus, with the sun just sinking behind the waves of the Pacific Ocean, with the cloudless sky bathed in hues of purple, gold and red, with the whole visible world steeped in the soft glamour of the sunset hour, what a scene of grandeur and beauty spread out before us!

Far to the southeast rose the dark, wooded outlines of the Calapooia Mountains, stretching from Coast Range across to Cascades. This range constitutes the southern boundary of the Willamette Valley proper. From between the foothills of the Cascades and Calapooia, where these approach and fuse into one, appeared the Mackenzie Fork, one of the chief tributaries of the Willamette River. Its course could be dimly traced winding through the distant hills, until the stream rushed upon the fertile valley east of Eugene. Following its course the eye noted each turn until its waters mingled with the other parent fork known as the Willamette River. United, the stream, widened and deepened, moved onward in its march to the ocean. Each turn and wind of the beautiful river was clearly marked by the broad, green belt of timber growing along the banks. Down the rich valley glided the stream; here moving in a straight line for several miles; there twisting like a gigantic serpent, in places almost turning back upon its general course; winding among the oak-clad hills of Lane; along through the fertile plains of Linn and Benton; past the rich fields of yellow, waving grain and the smiling homes of thrifty, happy farmers; past the cheerful hamlets of Harrisburg, Monroe and Peoria; past the more pretentious towns of Corvallis and Albany, whose white residences, somber-hued brick buildings and church spires showed vague and misty in the red light of the expiring day. Onward, onward, flowed the clear, lovely river, expanding and deepening as it glided softly toward its far-off ocean home, glancing and gleaming like a broad ribbon of burnished silver as its waters flashed into view between occasional openings in its green environment. Onward, ever onward, singing its low musical lay, as the waters fretted the pebbly shores, until the stream faded away, lost in the dreamy, mysterious distance amidst the emerald hills of Polk and Marion counties.

Sweeping the eye along the valley south, what a diversified panorama was presented! Lane County spread out its broad, rich acres of prairie, timbered plain and undulating upland. White cottages dotted the landscape like mere specks in a sea of dark verdure. Fields of golden grain nodded in the twilight wind with their swelling promise of abundant harvest. Several small streams, leaving the base of the Cascades, wound across the country and poured their watery stores into the Willamette. Far above the surrounding landscape rose the bold knob-shaped head of Spencer's Butte.

Westward the eye roved across the Willamette River and took in at one comprehensive glance the southern portion of Benton. The Coast Range, trending south-