

more surely than by raising grain, or could until the plow began encroaching upon their ranges, as it has already in many cases. It is to be hoped that more attention will be turned to dairying by the owners of the grassy bottoms along the stream.

The next stream of importance is Birch Creek, falling into the Umatilla thirty miles above the mouth of Butter Creek. In all its essentials this stream is similar to the one just described. It is in the transition period from the pastoral to agricultural industry. This means that more people are settling here every year, and that the herders' camp-fire is giving place to the domestic hearth. Uncle Sam owns thousands of acres of bunch grass hills which he is willing to give to those who will build there a home. Many settlers think they have a soil equal to that of the famous wheat lands about Weston and Centerville; but it has not been tried sufficiently to demonstrate this fact. It is undoubtedly excellent. There are, however, great stretches of grass-covered hills not fit for grain raising, which will always be devoted to grazing for stock. In such places the soil is thin and the rocks close to the surface. We find much land of this character adjacent to the bluffs of most of the principal streams, and on the ridges between streams where they approach somewhat near together, as is the case on the ridge between Butter and Birch creeks, north of Willow Springs, and between Birch and McKay creeks in some localities where they are not far apart, and in other instances. Other tributaries of the Umatilla are McKay, Wild Horse and Cottonwood creeks. Willow Creek is an important stream, entering the Columbia near the western end of the county. It runs northward from the mountains down a canyon, where the conditions are in most respects similar to those described as existing along Butter Creek. The stream forks into two branches, on one of which—the north—lies the town of Heppner. Willow Creek canyon is the route by which the whole region in which that prosperous town is situated finds an outlet to the railroad on the bank of the Columbia. Thousands of pounds of wool annually go out of the county by this route, and thousands of pounds of goods enter by the same way.

In the extreme southeastern corner of the county, in the very heart of a western spur of the Blue Mountains, the North Fork of John Day River sweeps into it from Grant County. Numerous small tributaries fall into it, along which are many little mountain valleys. There is one of these mountain valleys of considerable size, known as Camas Prairie, which is a paradise of beauty and fertility. It is a nearly circular basin, some twelve miles in diameter, entirely surrounded by mountains covered from base to peak with forests of pine and fir. The valley is crossed here and there with dark green belts of pines, and gently swells up to the base of the foothills, back of which rise the towering mountains, with streams of ice cold water running down the rugged canyons. The prairie is divided up into four small valleys—viz., "Snipe," "Round," "Wilson" and "Big (or Main) Camas," with intervening ridges of upland, which are

covered with large, stately pines. It is claimed by some that this upland will produce wheat when it is cleared. There are a few places in Camas Prairie where wheat can be grown without fear of frost; but take the valley in its entirety, it is too frosty for successful wheat growing, except it be used for hay. Barley and oats do well, however. Good gardens can be made on most of the places claimed, or ever likely to be claimed. It is well adapted to dairying and stock raising, being watered by Camas Creek, Owens Creek, Snipe Creek and other tributaries to the John Day. Besides, there are countless numbers of never-failing springs along the foothills and in the valley, some of them running nearly an inch stream of water the year round. It is difficult to find a section of land that has not one or more of these springs.

Then there are the hot springs within a few miles of Alba, which are already becoming famous as a pleasure and health resort. Two and one-half miles south of Alba is a mineral spring with remarkable curative properties. For some years past this valley has been the Mecca of all cattle and sheep men of Eastern Oregon, who would drive their immense herds in here every summer to pasture on the rich, nutritious grasses. But all this is changed now; for what was once one of the finest stock ranges in the world is fast being broken by the plow, and stockmen are obliged to seek "pastures new." To the sportsman Camas Prairie offers superior inducements. In the spring large numbers of salmon find their way from the Columbia up the John Day, thence up the various creeks, where they are easily caught; and these streams abound with the delicious mountain trout. Elk, deer, antelope, mountain sheep, wolves, cougars, wild cats, etc., are numerous; while if any one thinks he has lost a bear he can very soon find him in the mountains on the south side of the valley. Of game fowls there are grouse, pheasants, chickens, and in the spring myriads of geese, ducks and cranes. A new era has opened for Camas Prairie. Those who settled there three years ago with little or nothing have made a good start on the highway to prosperity. Some 2,000 tons of hay, 25,000 pounds of butter and 4,000 pounds of cheese are made there annually. There are three school houses in the prairie, and a good store and post office, shops, etc., are located in the little town of Alba, in the northern end of the prairie.

We have now passed over the entire county, but there is one section already mentioned which merits a more extended description, since it offers splendid opportunities for settlement. This is known as the "Cold Spring Country," and lies to the southeast of that portion of the Columbia River between Umatilla and Wallula. The following description of that rapidly developing section was written by Mr. A. F. Parker, a resident of that region, and a journalist well known in the Pacific Northwest. Careful attention is invited to his statements, which are made from personal observation. Mr. Parker says:

With the exception of a narrow belt of sand and sage brush, about one mile in width, bordering on the Columbia River, there is scarcely an acre of waste land in the