

THE STATE OF OREGON.

HALF a century ago the term "Oregon" was used to designate the whole watershed of the mighty Columbia River, including the present political divisions of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and portions of British Columbia and Montana; but it now signifies definitely the State of Oregon, lying between the forty-second parallel on the south and the Columbia River and forty-sixth parallel on the north, and extending from the Pacific Ocean eastward to Snake River and the fortieth Washington meridian. On the north lies Washington Territory, on the east is Idaho, south are Nevada and California, while its western shore is swept by the waters of the vast Pacific. With a length from east to west of 350 miles, and a transverse width of 280 miles, the State embraces an area of 95,274 square miles, or 61,000,000 acres, of extremely diversified mountain, valley, hill and plateau lands. The proportion of arable land is indefinite, because much which is now classed simply as timber land will in future years be rendered fit for agriculture, while many square miles formerly deemed suitable for pastoral uses only have recently been decided fit subjects for the plow.

Three ranges of mountains traverse the State from north to south, between which lie great valleys, or expansive plateaus, giving a diversity of soil, climate and resources ranging over a wide scale. From Southern California to Alaska the Coast Range runs parallel to the ocean shore, its low summit ridge seldom (in Oregon) exceeding a score of miles from the water line, to which it gently slopes in some places, and in others projects into the water in bluffs and rocky headlands, that give the coast a rugged and forbidding aspect to the mariner. These mountains are covered with a dense growth of timber from base to summit on both sides. Parallel to this, about 100 miles further east, run the Cascades, extending from the California line north into British Columbia. These, also, are heavily timbered, with the exception of a series of lofty, snow-capped peaks, though on the eastern slope the timber is not so dense and does not extend into the lower land at the base. The Blue Mountains occupy the eastern end of the State, being a comparatively short range, extending from near the southern line to a few miles across the border into Washington Territory. A wealth of timber crowns this range also, being heavier in the northern portion. The lower levels of that portion east of the Cascades, fully two-thirds of the State, are generally devoid of timber, except along the watercourses, while west of those mountains, save numerous open spaces in the valleys, the country is one continuous forest, covering fully five-sixths of its area. The cause of this is clear when the climatic conditions are studied.

The forest trees of Oregon embrace many of the most commercially valuable kinds. The best trees are found at medium elevations, accessible by ordinary logging roads. Their value depends largely upon accessibility. The timber is worth from \$5 to \$50 per acre, depending upon quantity and quality of trees. Standing timber, or

"stumpage," ranges from \$1 to \$1.50 per thousand feet, board measure. The principal trees found on the low lands are fir, pine, cedar, yew, ash, oak, maple, balsam, or cottonwood, alder and myrtle. On the higher levels are fir, pine, spruce, cedar, hemlock, larch and madrone. Of the firs and pines there are several varieties, but the most common and generally diffused is the *abies Douglassii*, or Douglass fir, sometimes called "Oregon pine," which is the main reliance of the lumbermen. This noble tree grows to the height of 300 feet, with a perfectly straight trunk, and its lowest limb is frequently 100 feet from the ground. Specimens have been found eight feet in diameter and over 400 feet high. Besides being used almost exclusively in the State, it is shipped in great quantities to San Francisco, South American ports, Sandwich Islands, Australia and China. It possesses great toughness and durability, and is especially adapted to shipbuilding. Planks and spars of any length up to 100 feet are easily procurable. The common cedar is also well distributed and cut in quantity at the mills. The white cedar, growing in great bodies in the southern coast region, is an especially valuable tree, and is cut in great quantity, chiefly for shipment.

The climatic conditions are varied, giving three, and even four, distinct climatic areas. Yet all are in their way desirable, and compare favorably with other regions. It is well known that a wide difference in temperature exists in corresponding latitudes on the Atlantic coasts of the United States and of Europe, and the cause has been well established. While along the eastern shores of our own country courses the Arctic ocean current, bearing down from the northern sea its icy waters, the western countries of Europe are warmed by the mighty Gulf stream, which bears to their shores the thermal waters of the tropical ocean.

The Columbia River region is in the same latitude as sunny France, Switzerland and portions of Italy, Spain and Portugal. It is subject to oceanic influences very similar to those of the countries mentioned, and necessarily has a somewhat similar climate. All this region is near enough to the Pacific Ocean to be markedly affected by its currents. By reference to any map whereon the ocean currents are shown, it will be seen that the great Japan current (Kuro Siwo)—that mighty stream of warm water—bears directly against the western shores of America. The temperature of the winds blowing over it is affected by its heat, and they carry their modifying influences inland many hundred miles.

The average spring temperature of Western Oregon is 52 degrees; summer, 67; autumn, 53; winter, 39, or 52.75 degrees for the whole year. The thermometer seldom rises above 90 degrees in the hottest days in the summer, and rarely falls below 20 degrees in the winter, so that the most active outdoor labor may be performed at all times of the year and at all hours of the day. Considering the thermometer's limited range during the four seasons, and the other conditions peculiar to the locality, a year would be more properly divided into two seasons—the wet and the dry, the former lasting from the middle