

## THE BIG BEND COUNTRY.

**A** WISCONSIN MAN, Capt. B. C. Hallin, recently made a tour of observation through Lincoln, Adams and Douglas counties, comprising that portion of Eastern Washington lying south and east of the big bend of the Columbia and stretching from that stream to the line of the Northern Pacific railroad. From a letter to the *Ritzville Record* describing his impressions of that region and what it offers to immigrants, the following paragraphs are taken: Our first camp for dinner was made at Crab creek, where there was an abundance of willow wood and good water. Following down Crab creek from this point we passed several sheep ranches, for which the region seems specially adapted, though cattle and horses are by no means scarce. I think all the horses, cattle and sheep in the state of Wisconsin could graze on the ground we passed over on our first day's trip. We camped in the evening on the open prairie, using sage brush for cooking supper, and picked up a good supply for keeping fire all night. After supper we paid a visit to the next ranch where we met the owner. Among his horses we noticed a splendid imported Clydesdale stallion, nearly a perfect piece of horse flesh. He has nine thousand head of sheep, in three bands, ranging up and down the creek and on the adjacent table lands. He fed his stock a little more than three weeks during the past winter, and that was longer than there was any necessity for, which caused us Wisconsin men to make a mental comparison of the difference in climate of home and here. Think of it! In Wisconsin we feed seven months, corn, oats and timothy, with a free run to wheat and oat stacks and corn fodder, with good shelter, and we manage to bring our stock through by the skin of their teeth, and nearly everything, both man and beast, is exhausted and partially frozen, and with an Arctic look stamped on everything that has life. Everything I have seen up to this time in the shape of sheep, horses and cattle are in equally as good condition as ours in Wisconsin at any time of the year, excepting, of course, stalled for the market block. I mean to say that every kind of stock here has made its own living the past winter, without being fed or sheltered, and is now in good order, and do not have to be lifted up by the tail every morning. Truly, this is the heaven on earth for horses, cows and sheep. Yet they will ask as much for a single sheep, cow or horse as we would in Wisconsin. For instance, sheep are worth \$3.50 apiece; a good cow and calf are worth from \$45.00 to \$50.00, and a span of medium horses, \$200.00 to \$250.00.

We continued our travel down to the sink of Crab creek. I mean by the sink, where the water entirely disappears and rises no more to the surface, but finds its way through some subterranean channel to mingle with the great Columbia. We noticed some of the finest grazing land man ever saw. As far as the eye could reach it was one unbroken, immense plain, covered with bunch grass as thick as timothy, and far more nutri-

tious. In my estimation if ever a stock man wants to see elysium fields or his earthly paradise, he has but to come here and cry "Eureka!" The country here, too, is perfectly treeless. Nothing that can be called timber is to be found this side of the Cascade mountain range, although along most of the streams willow, cottonwood and alder are found in sufficient quantities for fences and firewood. In talking to some of the settlers about the scarcity of timber, they poo-pooed at us; they don't need one-half the timber we woodsmen are expected to have on one well-regulated farm in Wisconsin. As soon as the tunnel is completed coal can be shipped here for from \$3.50 to \$4.00 per ton. We next entered Moses Coulee, and to the lover of the grand in nature I will say that he will be amply recompensed for any hardship he may undergo in coming here. Stupendous walls of basaltic rock on either side for twenty-two miles; sometimes standing on end, sometimes lying horizontally, so regular at times that it is difficult not to believe some Titan architect was out here on a jamboree, fitted octagon and pollegon, septagon and square in one harmonious whole. It is grand, sublime and beautiful beyond anything I ever saw. In going down this coulee we met several bands of sheep and cattle which were in splendid condition. We also saw several bands of Cayuse ponies, with Indians herding them, all looking fit for market. It snowed some that night, and the mountains could be seen in the distance for several days partially covered, so we concluded to return to Ritzville by another route, as we learned from an Indian that the snow was too deep to allow us to cross the mountains with a team.

Our aim in starting was to see the stock come out of winter quarters; see for ourselves how they were fed and looked, and compare them with our own in Wisconsin. Well, I must say that I am ashamed to make the comparison; it is all a jug-handle concern, and we of Wisconsin withdraw any and all pretension to rivalry. The impression upon a stranger on first viewing the soil is not very favorable, reminding one of worn-out brick-yards in the states. But upon inquiry and observation this impression vanishes, and you are apt to become enthusiastic where at first you were cynical and fault-finding.

The stranger coming from the state of Wisconsin, or from any other of the northwestern states, must not think he will find things here as he did in his pioneer days of the settlement of those old states, where the settlers could find wood mostly within the drive of a day, and water was by no means scarce. Often the writer of this article, while going for firewood to the woods, would kill a deer or some other game that helped to bridge over the time that must elapse before raising his own pork. Nothing of that kind here. Game is scarce and consists only of a few sage hens and jack-rabbits. You can not build even a chicken house here unless out of lumber that has to be hauled from the nearest station. Your firewood, also, is an item that will strike you as almost insurmountable; but in a few years that item will