

LANE COUNTY, OREGON.

THE beauty, fertility, healthfulness and equability of climate of the Willamette valley, are facts of such wide and certain knowledge as to render it almost unnecessary to refer to them in giving a description of any portion of Oregon lying within its limits. For half a century its praises have been sung, and now the third generation of its Caucasian occupants is growing up within the sight of hundreds of those hardy pioneers, now old and venerable, who first built homes in this Arcadian wilderness and subdued the rich soil to the plow. Great is the work accomplished in that half century. Millions of acres have been cleared fenced and cultivated; houses, barns and orchards dot the landscape; good roads lead in every direction from the scores of cities, towns and villages bustling with commercial life; railroads, steamboats and telegraph lines minister to the commercial wants of the people; newspapers, public schools, seminaries, universities and churches innumerable speak volumes of their intellectual and moral advancement, and yet there is much to be done which calls for intelligent and persevering effort. Many thousands of acres of fertile lands yet remain to be tilled; new forms of agriculture need to be introduced; industries for the utilization of home products and the creation of a demand for more diversified crops need to be established; the mountains are full of mineral and timber wealth calling for development. A man of means, energy and experience need have no fear of not finding here that which will give him profitable employment for them all. It requires but the exertion of the same good judgment and management necessary any where, to insure equal success here, where all the accompanying conditions of life are so superior. While this is the fact generally throughout the Willamette valley, it is the purpose of this article to direct the attention more particularly to that portion of it lying at the extreme upper, or southern, end, a region well worthy the immigrant's careful consideration.

Lane county was named in honor of Gen. Joseph Lane, the first governor of Oregon territory under the laws of the United States. It has an area of two thousand four hundred square miles, and is the largest of any of the counties lying wholly, or in part, in the Willamette valley. Linn and Benton counties bound it on the north; on the east it extends to the summit of the Cascades, on the south it is separated from Douglas county by the Calipooia mountains, a chain running transversely from the Coast Range to the Cascades, and on the west it crosses the Coast Range to the Pacific. Lying partially in the valley and partially on the slope of three ranges of mountains, the topography and soil are necessarily of a varied character. The valley portion is composed mainly of level or slightly rolling fertile prairie, through which runs the Willamette, dividing within the county into two forks, and several important tributaries, such as the McKenzie, Mohawk and Long Tom rivers. Numerous other watercourses flow down

from the mountains and enter the main stream, or one of its confluent, and a considerable river, the Siuslaw, flows through the southwestern portion of the county, crossing the mountains, and discharges into the ocean near the line of Douglas county.

The valley reaches its arms far up into the foot hills of the enclosing mountains, offering a wide area of agricultural land, which has for years yielded an abundance of diversified products. Wheat that took the first prize at the centennial exposition, at Philadelphia, was raised in this county, and the same farmer has taken numerous prizes for his cereals at other exhibits, including the recent large one held at New Orleans. The white velvet wheat of the Willamette valley, fall sown, has no superior in the world, being large, plump, heavy, hard, and producing the finest quality of flour. Wheat raising is the leading feature of agriculture in Lane county, though other branches are by no means neglected. There are numerous fine bearing orchards in the county, whose large and luscious cherries, plums, pears and apples are sent to market in their natural state, or as dried or evaporated fruit. The fruit of the Willamette valley has of late years acquired a wide celebrity, owing to the railroad facilities for sending it to distant markets which have recently been provided. It requires nothing but an opportunity to place itself in competition with California and other regions to prove itself equal to the best, and superior in size and flavor to the great bulk of fruit found in the markets of the East. Now that a more extended market is opening, more attention is being paid to fruit culture, and besides the orchards to be found on nearly every farm, a number of large orchards have been set out by experienced pomologists who intend to make a specialty of raising fruit for shipment. In a few years the already large fruit crop of Lane county will be greatly increased.

Another important branch of agriculture is hop raising. The deep alluvial soil, enriched by the deposits and vegetable decay of ages, brought down by the streams and stored along their banks, is especially adapted to the growth of hops. To this may be added the further advantage of an entire absence of any disease affecting the vines or any insect pests, both of which have so often ruined the crops of Wisconsin and New York. The latter state, the largest hop producer in America, has this year had its crop almost totally destroyed by the aphid, a parasite of great destructiveness. The result is that the price of hops has advanced to such figures that growers in this region will make a handsome sum on this year's crop. Five years ago, under somewhat similar circumstances, hops reached one dollar per pound. As the cost of placing them in marketable condition is less than eight cents, the producer who has even five acres of vines, yielding only fifteen hundred pounds per acre (and double that quantity has been picked at times), has a good return for his outlay of time and labor.

Much attention has been paid to the raising of cattle, horses and sheep. The foot hills and mountain