

HOOD RIVER VALLEY.

IN its broad extent Oregon presents many diverse characteristics of soil, climate and topography. Valleys in some portions of the state differ in a very marked degree from others, and these differences are the result of local conditions, chiefly topographical, so that distance is but a small factor in the problem. One of the most marked instances is that of Hood river valley, lying but a few miles east of the great valley of the Willamette, from which it differs in many essential particulars.

Hood river has its source among the melting snows and glacial streams of the great Mount Hood, from whose spreading base it flows northward in an impetuous torrent, carrying a large volume of water and pouring it into the Columbia twenty-five miles distant from the mountain. In this distance its average fall is fifty feet to the mile, thus offering splendid water power along its entire course. Bordering on this beautiful stream lies one of the loveliest valleys the eye of man ever rested upon, separated by a range of hills from the high and open plateau of Eastern Oregon, and from the Willamette valley by the timbered summits of the Cascades. Its climate is peculiar to itself, and is a delightful mean between the humidity of the Willamette valley and the aridity of the great eastern plateau. As the moisture-laden clouds sweep over the region west of the mountains the greater portion of their burden is precipitated in the form of rain in the valley and snow on the higher mountain summits, so that the quantity of moisture retained by the time they reach the valley of Hood river is comparatively small. This gives to that lovely mountain valley all the rain necessary to preserve its beauty and promote the growth of luxuriant vegetation, without subjecting it to that continual drenching or overshadowing it with those threatening rain clouds which is the lot of the region west of the mountains during the winter season. On the other hand, as the Cascades protect it from the excessive rains from the west, the enclosing hills on the east shelter it from the warm, dry winds of summer, and the cold winds of winter, which sweep across the great inland plateau. Sheltered in winter from Bo-rean blasts, and cooled in summer by the mountain breezes, the climate is most delightful and invigorating. There are but a few days in the year when the thermometer indicates a temperature as high as ninety degrees or as low as zero. Winter is short, being cut off at both ends by the encroachments of fall and spring. Snow falls in the valley in mid-winter, often to a considerable depth, but there are no strong winds to pile it up into drifts, and the warm breath of the Chinook, that mild visitor from the sea, soon carries

it away. Thus the soil receives all the fertilizing benefits of the snow, while the people are exempt from the more disagreeable features of a snowy region.

It will naturally be judged from what has been said that the valley possesses a fertile soil, responsive to the wooings of the husbandman. The soil is chiefly volcanic, a memento of the time in ages past when the great mountain monarch was throbbing with the energy of internal fires. Though not as universally adapted to grain culture as the lands of the Willamette valley, careful farming produces excellent crops. Vegetables, also, yield well, both in quantity and quality. It is, however, to the production of superior fruit that this volcanic soil seems best adapted. The apples and peaches of Hood river have a reputation of their own, even in this land where inferior fruit is unknown. The excellence of the valley in this respect is becoming so well known, that many thousands of fruit trees are being set out, and in a few years the quantity of fruit seeking market from the banks of Hood river will be enormous. The market for this in the adjacent fruitless region is large, while the same facilities for shipment east in carload lots exist here as elsewhere in the state.

Hood river figures prominently as a tourists' resort. It is the place where most of the travel to that grand old monarch of the Cascades, Mount Hood, leaves the railroad or the river for the mountain excursion. A regular route is established and there is hunting and fishing to suit the most fastidious sportsman. There is nothing commonplace about an excursion up the deep gorges and canyons of the mountains, clambering over the icy fields and broken glaciers, and exploring the dark crevasses that yawn for the unwary adventurer. Those scientifically inclined find features of absorbing interest on every hand. Hood river being so accessible by both boat and rail from all quarters, and in the heart of a section of such unusual beauty and grandeur, is a most attractive place for the pleasure seeker or explorer. It is also growing to be a popular health resort.

The valley of Hood river has a population of twelve hundred. The town of Hood River is situated near the mouth of the stream on the Oregon Railway & Navigation Co.'s main line. It has been built up entirely since the railway was constructed, and now has between two and three hundred people. It is from this station that the wagon road leads to Mount Hood. It has quite a number of mercantile establishments and a healthy trade with the farmers and stockmen in that vicinity. Both the town and valley are characterized by the intelligence and morality of the people. There is a strong temperance sentiment among them, and no saloon is allowed to exist in the