

Probably the statements about the fertility of that region will seem extravagant to some readers who thought they knew a good deal about the country, so let us consider the matter somewhat in detail. In the first place it is distinctively an agricultural country. Stock raising on the tillable area must decrease in proportion as the soil is brought under cultivation, but there is abundant pasturage in the foot hills of the mountains that will never be tilled and will always furnish the best of grazing, and such lands will be occupied more closely when the farmers drive the cattle and horses and sheep from the wide expanse of rolling bunch grass plain, and the nomadic vaquero gives way to the industrious husbandman, with his comfortable home and sober life. The soil throughout the section now penetrated by this railway system is analogous. The chemical analysis shows it to be among the richest in wheat producing properties of any in the United States; it is even said to be unexcelled elsewhere in the world outside of the island of Sicily. This rich soil is in many places twenty-five to forty feet deep, and such is the capillary attraction that it is practically exhaustless, the fertilizing properties being drawn to the surface constantly as the growing vegetation absorbs the nutriment. From the winter rains and the atmosphere the strength of the land is renewed. The use of artificial fertilizers is an almost unheard of thing in that country. The soil arises from the disintegration of volcanic rocks, and it bears a close resemblance to a dark colored clay loam. It is of very fine texture. Through the driest seasons it holds moisture, which may always be found near the surface of the ground. Forty and fifty bushels to the acre are common yields of wheat, and as much as sixty or seventy bushels are sometimes grown throughout large fields. While grain, and especially wheat, is the product for which that country is best suited, there is no lack of the proper conditions for producing a great variety of the ordinary farm crops, sweet potatoes, peanuts, sorghum, melons and the finest of general fruits. Peaches, apples, pears, nectarines, etc., and all small fruits of prime excellence are grown. The yield for a given area is very large, but only a small portion of the section is now cultivated, so the aggregate production is not large in comparison with the extent of the region.

From Hunt's Junction southeast toward Pendleton, the Oregon & Washington Territory railway passes up the Vansycle canyon, and, though the canyon itself is not of special fertility, the country to the brink on either side is of the character described above. Emerging from the canyon, the road extends across the plain, and as Centerville and Pendleton are approached the wild bunch grass gives way to fields of waving grain, and neat and comfortable farm houses

greet the eye in every direction. For many miles along this railroad as far as the eye can see the country is covered with growing crops. At Grand View station one of the grandest prospects imaginable lies before the observer. That is the most elevated point on the line, and from it may be seen the Walla Walla country, Eureka flat, the Columbia and Snake rivers, and the Blue mountains in the distance, and the intervening fertile fields and bunch grass pastures. Not many farm houses are seen, because each land owner holds a large area—sometimes a few hundred acres and sometimes a few thousand—and many of them live in the cities, from which they conduct their farming operations. It is also noticeable that only in the neighborhood of the cities or along the older lines of communication is there any considerable degree of agricultural development. It is not because of any difference in the producing powers of the land that there is any difference in improvement, but simply the lack of means to get the ordinary products of the soil to market. Where the land is not cultivated stock range throughout the year, and the sleek animals are sufficient proof of the excellence of their pasture.

On this line of road, which is mostly in Oregon, Stanton Junction is one of the important shipping points. Helix is also a flourishing town on this line. It has cattle yards, an elevator and large warehouses and a number of mercantile houses doing a brisk business. It promises to become an important town. There are several stations on this line where great quantities of wheat are shipped.

The railroad through the Eureka flat country extends almost due northeast from Hunt's Junction. Twenty-one miles from Hunt's the present main line turns to the southeast and pursues a somewhat irregular course up the Touchet river and across the divide to Dry creek and Spring creek and enters the very heart of the city of Walla Walla. The branch which is now in operation twenty miles from Eureka Flat junction will be extended through to Riparia, fifteen miles beyond on Snake river, before the end of the present year.

Eureka flat has for some years been known as a surpassingly rich country, but its remoteness from transportation has tended to deter farmers from locating there. The lack of communication also prevented the examination of the country, except immediately along the shores of Snake river. But the harvest from the few scattered ranches in the interior was so bountiful that when delivered on the banks of that stream the greatest difficulty was experienced in getting it marketed before the high water of the succeeding year. Hunt's lines have opened that remarkably fertile region to the investigation of settlers, and