

The merely negative virtues of the Grande Ronde are not its only recommendations. It is not subject to drouths nor insect pests nor great extremes of climate. It does produce forty or fifty bushels of wheat to the acre, and as high as sixty in some instances, and oats, rye and barley in the same proportion. Forty or fifty bushels are more than the average yield but the farmer who does not get thirty bushels or more from an acre of ground on which ordinary cultivation has been bestowed is very much disappointed. Corn is a successful crop in the valley. Root crops and vegetables of all kinds yield well and of excellent quality. The fruit lands of the valley are suitable for the production of apples, pears, plums, prunes, peaches, cherries and berries, but the fruit industry has not been developed sufficiently to show any great results. All the more common varieties of fruit are grown and it is clearly demonstrated that orcharding can be made a profitable business with a reasonable amount of attention. The Wallowa country, just below the Grande Ronde valley, is a great peach growing section, and there appears to be no reason why the Grande Ronde can not also be made an important fruit country. Perhaps more than any other crop fruit is sensitive to the influence of altitude, and by choosing locations about the edges of the valley any of the fruits mentioned above, and a great many others, would flourish. The surrounding mountains serve as a protection from harmful winds and the temperature is sufficiently equable to render orcharding reasonably certain. Hops are being grown to quite a considerable extent and are found to be so successful a crop that many are going into the business quite extensively. The soil and climate seem favorable and an excellent quality of hops is produced. Some of the wet lands could be easily drained and rendered cultivable, but the hay crop is so important that they are left in their natural state and three or four tons of hay are harvested from an acre.

The topography of the Grande Ronde valley does not present a very great variety of features. The spurs of the Blue mountains bound the valley on every side except the northeast where it merges with the Indian valley, which, in turn, joins the Wallowa. The Grande Ronde river takes its rise in the Blue mountains more than fifty miles to the westward of LaGrande and pursues a devious course through canyons until it reaches the Grande Ronde valley. Throughout its entire length it is a rapid stream but the best water power privileges are near where it emerges from the mountains, for there it can be utilized and below the power is less. The Grande Ronde is the largest stream in Northeastern Oregon flowing into the Snake river. It is about one hundred miles

from LaGrande to the mouth of the river. The valley of the Grande Ronde is somewhat elliptical in contour with the northeast end open. The lowest portion of the surface is along the river. From the base of the mountains to the stream the descent is gentle. The land has good drainage. The soil is of an alluvial nature and has great strength and durability. There is not a foot of arid land in the valley. It is a most beautiful tract from any point of view. Before it was invaded by civilization, three or four decades ago, the Indians of Eastern Oregon, Washington and Idaho used to congregate there in great numbers in the summer time to enjoy the hunting and fishing and racing while their animals grew fat on the succulent pasturage. It is no wonder they made a desperate struggle to retain so fair a country as that. Since civilization spread over the valley its appearance has changed considerably, but it is still an attractive place for sportsmen.

Nearly all the Grande Ronde valley was state land and it has all been taken up, but in large tracts of from three hundred and twenty to one thousand acres. The present population, however, is unable to cultivate much more than half the farming area, and eligible farms can be purchased for from \$8.00 to \$15.00 an acre for the unimproved and from \$15.00 up for the improved. Those who are engaged in farming do not want to sell unless they have more than they can cultivate, which is frequently the case. The prices mentioned are for good land in the valley. If one chooses to go a little distance into the foothills, land, quite a large per cent. of which is cultivable, may be obtained as low as \$3.00 an acre. The Grande Ronde wants a few thousand people to improve its natural advantages. The facts of the country need no gilding to attract the intelligent husbandman. It is as much of a paradise as is often found.

LaGrande is the chief city of that region, but there are several towns down the valley and in Indian valley and the Wallowa country that are centers of a flourishing trade, though they must all go to LaGrande to reach the railroad. The patronage of the interior makes LaGrande a very important trade center, and the volume of business is steadily and rapidly increasing. The efforts now being directed to securing manufacturing enterprises will still further intrench the city in its prosperity. The city has a bank with a capital of \$60,000.00, carrying deposits averaging \$75,000.00. Its business houses are all of stable character. It is with pardonable pride that the people of LaGrande state there has never been a business failure in their community. The city supports two good local newspapers. The receipts of the post office are increasing at the rate of about ten per cent. a quarter. One of the five government land