

THE VALLEY OF WALLOWA.

IN the northeastern extremity of Oregon lies the fertile and beautiful valley of Wallowa, now attracting that share of public attention which its merits long ago demanded. Only the fact that it lay to one side of the usual routes of travel can be ascribed the neglect by immigrants of one of the fairest and most desirable portions of Oregon's broad and fertile domain; but this condition of affairs is passing away, and immigration is now pouring into that region and finding opportunities unexcelled elsewhere in the west. The building of the O. R. & N. Co. three years ago through Union county, of which Wallowa was then a portion, brought that region nearer the paths of immigration than formerly, and made known to many what was before only realized by a few, that here is to be found one of the most inviting fields for immigration yet opened to the occupation of the thousands of home seekers anxious to exchange the rigors of the eastern climate for the balmy zephyrs of the Pacific. Wallowa county has had an official existence of two years, during which time it has made great progress in wealth, population and material development. It occupies the extreme northeastern corner of the state, and consists of a diversity of mountain, hill and valley, that renders its scenery beautiful in the extreme and its resources most varied and valuable. Stretching for a distance of forty miles through the center of the county, are the three valleys known as the Upper, Middle and Lower Wallowa. Bounded on the south and southwest by a lofty range of snow-capped mountains, and on the north and east by rolling hills that stretch away to the border lines of Idaho and Washington.

The usual route of travel in entering this region is by way of the Grande Ronde valley, through which runs the line of the O. R. & N. Co., which forms a portion of the transcontinental line of the Union Pacific known as the Oregon Short Line. From the edge of the Grande Ronde valley the road passes for a distance of about fifteen miles through a hilly country, traversing Indian valley and Cricket flat on the route, and then descends to the canyon of the Wallowa river, which it follows for nine miles, until it opens out into the Lower Wallowa valley, the earliest settled portion of the county. The land along the river and its tributaries, which are fringed with balsam, aspen, pine and fir trees, is all taken up, and many fine farms are to be seen. On the north the land gradually rises into hills, which stretch away to the north for many miles, covered with a rich, deep soil. Here is a wide scope of country still largely open to settlement, where water is easy to obtain by digging, and wood is plentiful. Still farther to the

north is a region of pine and tamarack timber, amid which are many open glades and meadows that make fine farms for hay. This timber will be of great value when a railroad is built into the valley, something which will certainly happen within a few years. In the valley are two saw mills, a shingle mill and a chop mill. A town was recently laid out on the river five miles above the canyon. The rainfall is ample for all purposes of agriculture and a crop failure is unknown. Fruit has been found to thrive and many fine orchards are being set out with splendid prospects for profit by their owners.

Middle Wallowa valley comprises an area of about sixty square miles, somewhat irregular in form, being widest at its upper, or eastern, end. It is well watered with running streams and contains much fine agricultural land. Immediately to the south the Eagle creek mountains rise abruptly to a great height, grand and picturesque, their summits crowned with snow nearly the entire year. The northern portion of the valley is higher than that along the river, and is locally known as "the hills," and though somewhat rough and broken, it contains some of the best agricultural land in the county, as well as much fine grazing land. All the cereals, as well as hay and vegetables, produce prolifically, wheat having been known to yield fifty bushels to the acre, barley seventy-five, oats one hundred, and timothy hay three tons. Small fruits and vegetables can be grown to perfection, and experiments with fruit trees have been so encouraging that many orchards are being set out. As transportation has not been sufficiently cheap to render grain farming profitable, stock raising has been the chief industry, but the advent of the railroad will mark a change in this respect and thousands of acres will be put in cultivation that have never known the plow. The streams afford ample water for irrigation of the lower lands whenever a dry season should render such artificial watering desirable, and a number of ditches have been dug as an assurance against a possible drouth. In the valley is situated the town of Lostine, on the south fork of the Wallowa river, containing a population approximating one hundred. Water power for manufacturing purposes is ample, and there is little doubt that Lostine will become both the manufacturing and commercial center of that portion of the county. In the mountains near by are a number of valuable mining claims undergoing development, and in the Wallowa canyon, only seven miles distant, are extensive ledges of marble and limestone. Lostine has a saw mill, several good mercantile houses, two churches, a fine school house, hotel and other accessories of a prosperous town.

Upper Wallowa valley is the largest of the three, and is a tract fifteen miles long by six wide, well tim-