

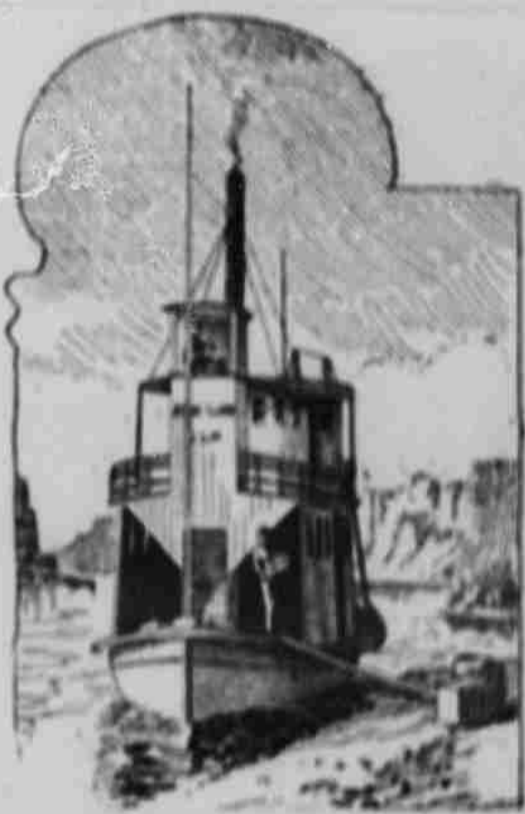
DOWN THE RAPIDS OF THE COLUMBIA.

THE history of steamboating in Oregon waters, from the beginning, has abounded in chapters of thrilling interest. Whether on the Willamette's placid bosom, the wind-swept rapids of the Upper Columbia, or the stormy inland sea of the "middle river," the occasion has been marked by daring deeds, imminent risks and frequent disasters. The terrific explosion of the *Gazelle* at Canemah, the fearful plunge of the *Portland* over the falls at Oregon City, the midnight wreck of the *Daisy Ainsworth* on the very brink of the cascades, the risky run of the *Harvest Queen* down the reef-thrugged channel of Tumwater will long be remembered by those who cherish the river-lore of the far west. These are all called to mind by the successful passage of the turbulent cascades last Sunday, May 18, of the last named vessel, under the skillful management of Captain J. W. Troup.

Early navigation of the Willamette was attended with great difficulty and loss by reason of the unwieldy character of the boats employed—large, clumsy, side wheelers, similar to contemporaneous Mississippi craft. The opportune arrival of Captain J. C. Ainsworth, then a young pilot from the Ohio, marked a new era in the business. Disgusted with the performance of the *Lot Whitcomb*, a single-shaft side-wheeler, owned principally by Governor Abernethy, he, together with Mr. Jacob Kamm, built the *Jennie Clark*, the first stern-wheeler in Oregon. She ran between Portland and the falls at Oregon City for years unscathed, while her more pretentious predecessors were relegated to the bone-yard. Nevertheless many years elapsed before the perfection of model was reached which—at the present time—admits of navigation the year round by means of flat-bottomed, square-knuckled boats such as are seen on the Upper Willamette to-day. A coincidence worth mentioning is the fact that the present style of stern-wheelers was introduced by Captain U. B. Scott, also a pilot from the Ohio.

Steam navigation began on the Upper Columbia about thirty years since. The homely, half-cabined stern-wheeler *Colonel Wright* first demonstrated the practicability of steamboating on the rapid, dangerous river. She was built to transport supplies for the troops at Fort Walla Walla. Previous to that time freight was forwarded by bateaux, shipped in small, neatly modeled schooners, or taken direct from The Dalles by teams and pack trains. The *Olanopon* was next placed on the route, the *Tesine* and other boats following in rapid succession. As the mines at Oro Fino and Florence were developed, the Oregon Steam Navigation Company was organized, and the people thought their days of greatest prosperity were come. But it was only during a short season following the

melting of the snows that the boats could reach Lewiston. In the hands of skillful, fearless pilots, some of whom owed their knowledge of the tortuous, boulder-blocked channel to friendly, well trained Indian boatmen, the primitive, ill-advantaged steamers escaped serious calamity until the wondrous wealth of the Inland Empire grain fields began to burden their decks on the downward passage. Then, heavily loaded with wheat, the older boats were very difficult to control in the strong rapids of the upper river. A better class of boats, known to steamboatmen as the "spoon-bowed," was developed, and the worn out, pioneer craft were tied up to the bank or beached and burned.



THE FIRST STERN WHEEL STEAMER ON THE WILLAMETTE AND COLUMBIA.

The *Olanopon* was the first to dare the dangers of the Grand Dalles. Being a small boat, and the most favorable stages of water duly taken advantage of, she ran the sixteen miles of alternating reach and rapid without mishap, and tied up at The Dalles. The passage of the cascades had never been attempted with a steamboat, though a small stern-wheeler, appropriately named the *Venture*, had drifted over by accident some years before when the water was so low that her escape from total destruction was almost miraculous. The *Olanopon* was too old for service on the Middle Columbia, and it was the company's desire to run her over the rapids to Portland, where she could be utilized in towing. When the time came the river was not high enough to render the attempt safe. Being badly water-logged, besides, the boat struck a ledge near the head of the falls and sank before reaching the foot of the rapids. When the water fell, however,