

GOLDENDALE AND THE KLICKITAT VALLEY.

Those accustomed to traveling along the Columbia river east of the Cascade mountains are not always favorably impressed with the character of the country as it appears from the window of a passenger coach. Many unjust judgments are pronounced upon the country based upon what the eye can see from the railway. Getting back over the hills that bound the narrow valley of the great river an important change is observed. There are broad areas of fertile land, a considerable portion of which is under cultivation. Streams carrying water throughout the year drain the country. The ridges and mountains bear timber valuable for fuel and lumber. There is no suggestion of the desert which one who had traveled up and down the Columbia might expect to see.

Crossing the river at The Dalles or Grant's station, on the main line of the Union Pacific railway, and ascending the tall hills that rise on the north side of the Columbia, there is in plain view as inviting a valley as may be found anywhere. It is the Klickitat valley, after which the county was named, and near the center of which is located the city of Goldendale. It is not the rough, uninhabitable section that the rugged Columbia river front would lead the transcontinental traveler to believe it. Gardens and orchards and hay and grain fields extend away to the base of the timber-clad ridges that mark the limits of the valley on the north. The Klickitat river is the most important tributary of the Columbia from the north or west between the Yakima and the Cascade mountains. Its northern fork takes its rise in the glaciers of Mount Adams, and a branch drains the western part of the Yakima Indian reservation. The eastern branch, or Little Klickitat, rises in the northern part of the county and pursues a tortuous course in a westerly direction to the junction. Goldendale is situated on the left bank of the latter stream.

Klickitat county has a frontage of 120 miles on the Columbia river and an average width north and south of about twenty-five miles. Its area is about 3,000 square miles and its population numbers about 6,000. Except in the extreme eastern part the county is well watered by numerous streams, such as Alder, Cottonwood, Pine and Rock creeks flowing into the Columbia, and the numerous small tributaries of the Klickitat. A few townships in the east get water from wells varying in depth between twenty and sixty feet. The watershed between the Yakima on the north and the Columbia on the south is in the extreme northern part of Klickitat county. All the streams sink into deep canyons as they approach the Columbia and flow between banks 1,000 or 2,000 feet high.

Goldendale is the county seat and the largest town in the county. It was settled in 1872 and incorporated in 1879 with a population of 500, and it now has about 1,000 inhabitants. In 1888 a great fire destroyed every business house in the city, entailing a property loss of \$250,000. The town has been rebuilt in a more substantial manner than before, but the loss was enough to stagger larger communities than Goldendale, and it has only been by the exercise of great perseverance and mutual helpfulness that the marks of the fire have been effaced in so short a time. The fact that the city was isolated from transportation advantages and had not the facilities at home for immediately supplying the heavy demand for building materials made its recovery from the fire more difficult than it would otherwise have been. For the most part Goldendale had to depend on her own energies, and the situation developed enterprise and independence among her citizens that is useful in pushing forward the best interests of the whole community. The brick and lumber for rebuilding were manufactured at home. There are seven saw mills within fourteen miles of

Goldendale, and two sash and door factories, a brick kiln, and two flour mills in town. It is probable that a woolen mill will soon be erected. Goldendale is a great wool market as well as a grain depot, and woolen manufacturing could be profitably conducted there. Two weekly papers cover the news field, and a banking house transacts a large business. The town has two good hotels, an opera house, four churches, the Second Regiment, National Guard of Washington, armory, a fire department and a brass band. The court house is a fine brick structure that cost \$15,000. There is not a brewery nor a saloon in the county, and only one man has been sent to the penitentiary from Goldendale during the past five years. Four teachers are employed in the public school, which is graded and kept up to a high degree of excellence. The assessed valuation of taxable property in the town is about \$300,000, which is not more than half the actual valuation. A water works system is being constructed, taking its supply from a mountain stream. There will be a storage reservoir 150 feet above the town. Goldendale has had no rail communication with the outside world, and its growth has been achieved in spite of that disadvantage. Everything to or from the town has been transported by stage or freight team to the nearest railway point—Grant's—on the Oregon side of the Columbia. In the fall the long lines of grain-laden teams that pour down the hill on their way from the Klickitat valley to the Columbia make an interesting sight, and indicate, in some degree, the importance of the products of that country. The great disadvantage of this isolation is about to be removed. The Hunt railway system (Oregon & Washington Territory) has entered into a contract to build a line to Portland, and the surveys made through Klickitat county touch Goldendale. Being compelled to traverse that country it would hardly be good business policy to pass such an important freight center without affording it an outlet. Then the configuration of the county is such that it is impracticable to build a line on the general route mapped out without going very near the city of Goldendale. The preliminary work of the Hunt surveyors is about finished, and there is no room for doubting that the new line will touch the Klickitat county seat. It will cross the Cascade mountains by way of Klickitat pass, which is only 3,200 feet above the sea. Within the coming year this county will have a railway running through almost its entire length, and will be exposed to all the enlivening influences that follow the opening of a new country to modern transportation facilities. The Hunt road is not like many projected railways—to be built some time or other. It is under positive contract involving the investment of \$2,000,000 by Portland capitalists to build to the Oregon metropolis. The investment has been made and the work of putting the line through is well under way. The fact that local capitalists have organized The Dalles, Goldendale & Northern Railway Company to build a line from The Dalles through Goldendale, which would tap a rich section whose patronage otherwise would be controlled by the Hunt road, is a further good reason for supposing that all haste will be made in the construction of the latter. Then the Klickitat valley will not only have better facilities for conducting local business but a good deal of transcontinental passenger traffic will go that way, so that thousands of settlers and capitalists will have the merits of that section brought attractively before them where they would otherwise scarcely give it a thought.

Though there is coal within forty-five miles of Goldendale, and promising gold and silver products in the Cascade mountains directly tributary to the city, and the timber resource is important, the chief strength of the city lies in the agriculture of the Klickitat valley, which is about ten by thirty miles in extent and has a rich, strong soil. The leading crop is grain, which yields abundantly. But any root, vegetable, fruit or cereal commonly produced in this latitude can be successfully grown. Hay is a profitable crop. Most of the land is occupied, though there are considerable tracts not yet under cultivation. The advent of a railroad will induce much closer tillage and a greater diversity in farm products. The grazing lands of the county sustain large numbers of cattle, horses and sheep. There is room for indefinite industrial expansion throughout the county, and Goldendale must reap benefit from the development of all its tributary country.