

THE MONTANA RANGES.

Gradually but surely the range industry sees the days of its glory depart. About 1884 it reached the zenith, and hovered there about a year or two, when the decline set in, says the *Rocky Mountain Husbandman*. The first cause of this was the weakening of the market, but this was the sole cause for a short time only, for the feed supply soon became a serious problem. The hard winter paralyzed the industry, so to speak, and our range stock owners were long-faced for years; and just as they were getting their herds back to the original numbers, the dry weather set in, causing the future to be filled with doubts and forebodings. The settlement of Montana after the dawn of the golden era was confined principally to the Beaverhead, Ruby, Jefferson, Madison, Gallatin, Missouri and Deer Lodge valleys. These valleys had come to be pretty well stocked before the close of the seventies, and the movements of herds to the Yellowstone, Musselshell, Judith, Sun river, Teton, Marias and other unsettled ranges was commenced. These new valleys were then the same paradise that their earlier homes were in the sixties. But another decade has passed, and we find to-day that the fencing of the water courses, willow patches and bottom lands on our streams and their tributaries far up into the mountains is driving the range industry far onto the frontier. Considerable stock is now moving to the Milk river country, and when this is full they will recoil upon the Crow and Blackfoot reservations.

There is but little doubt that the days of successful range growing are well nigh spent. The land owner is the man who is to eventually own the country. The day is not far distant when the owners of land will be the only cattle growers of note in the state, as the country will be a network of fencing. The production of stock will increase under the new regime if the winter problem is solved, and if not, many must be sacrificed to quality. As the country grows older, better breeds will take the place of our present stock, for when it comes to winter feeding—an era fast approaching—the scrub must go. When nature furnished feed in unlimited supply without the labor of man, anything was good enough to own; but with the new order of affairs our people will not be slow to learn that it will pay best to raise the best. When it comes to the country being fenced from mountain base to river strand, dairy herds and small bands of high grade cattle will be the rule. We have been accustomed to the range system so long that we regret to see it depart, but it is the inevitable decree of civilization that it must go, and that too in a very few years. But cattle growing in the manner described will remain as long as the succession of sunshine and storm renders our state habitable, and will be fully as remunerative as the same industry is in any portion of the country.

The Willapa Harbor Cold Storage and Packing Company has been organized at South Bend, Washington, with an authorized capital of \$100,000. One of the leading objects of the new company is to develop the oyster industry of Shoalwater bay, which for lack of suitable means for handling the bivalves and changing market conditions has fallen off so that present shipments are only about half what they were twenty years ago. Early in 1853 the attention of the pioneers was directed to the fact that extensive beds of oysters existed all around the bay, and some experimental shipments were made to California, where none existed at that time. The shipments were so well received, and yielded so handsome a profit, that a most flourishing industry sprang up and would have been still expanding to-day had not the chief market been almost completely cut off by the success of oyster culture in California. In the season of 1870 the business on Shoalwater bay had reached its prime. In that year fully 4,000 sacks a month were shipped, realizing on an average \$6 per sack here. During the mining excitement in earlier years, as much as \$8 per sack was realized. In short, when the business was in its prime, it was worth from \$250,000 to \$300,000 a year to Shoalwater bay. The business has been reviving during the past five years and with systematic culture it promises to assume its former importance. The oyster and clam beds of Shoalwater bay have an area of about 80,000 acres. The bivalves grown there are of the best quality, and the revival of the trade will be watched with interest, especially as that section is experiencing very rapid development in every line.

The Canadian Pacific, with its newly rehabilitated Oriental steamship line, will carry the imperial mails to and from China and Japan, and will make a special effort towards controlling the respective trades of those countries. One of these ships, the *Empress of India*, has been completed; the second, the *Empress of Japan*, will be completed by January first next, and the completion of the third, the *Empress of China*, will follow about March first. They will each cost about \$1,000,000, and it is said no expense will be spared to make them equal in all respects to any ships afloat. They are twin-screw steamers, of 10,000 horse-power, a gross tonnage of 5,700, and are contracted to do eighteen knots on the measured mile and sixteen and one-half knots on a 400 miles' sea trial. The dimensions are: Length, between perpendiculars, 485 feet; breadth, moulded, fifty-one feet, and

depth, moulded, thirty-six feet. Each vessel will carry 120 first-class, fifty second and 300 steerage passengers, as well as nearly 4,000 tons of cargo. A special feature will be made of the second-class travel, which the Canadian Pacific authorities believe may be extensively developed. They believe, too, the whole traffic by this route is capable of much expansion. Western ideas have of late so permeated the life of China, and especially of Japan, that the people of these countries are traveling far more than they did formerly. The *Empress of India* will sail for the Pacific coast about the first of November, and the others will follow as fast as completed.

The city council of Ellensburg, Washington, has purchased twenty acres of ground about four miles northeast of the city for a water works reservoir. It is 376 feet higher than the city. A large number of springs occupy the area, but an artesian well will be sunk so as to insure an abundant supply at all times. The reservoir will be of brick and cement, and at its outlet a filter will be placed. Half a mile nearer town a standpipe will be erected to equalize the pressure which will be sufficient to throw water over a seven-story structure in the city. It is estimated that the new water works will enable the city to save between \$7,000 and \$8,000 a year over the Holly system now in use. Ellensburg has just purchased the electric light plant that furnishes the city light. The price paid was \$35,000, and it is understood that the monthly receipts exceed the expenditures about \$300. The city is getting in a good condition for enjoying comfort and business prosperity.

Capt. Z. L. Tanner, of the United States fish commission's steamer *Albatross*, at Ounalaska, writes that he has just finished the examination of Bristol bay and finds that "the great coal banks lie along the north side of the peninsula, from the northwest cape of Unimak to Cape Constantine, off the Mshbragak." A series of geodetic surveys will be continued during September and prosecuted westward. He also writes that the *Rush* has gone north, and that owing to the lateness of the season he does not expect any more vessels up. The *Albatross* will sail for Port Townsend the latter part of September, and will return to San Francisco when the coast survey work for the season shall have been completed.

Caldwell, Idaho, claims a population of 1,200. The company that laid out the town recently sold its interests there and the conditions are now favorable for a healthy growth. \$20,000 have been expended in new business structures this season and about \$50,000 in residences. The railway company has made important improvements in the town this year. Caldwell has one bank with a capital of \$50,000 and eight stores carrying stocks ranging in value from \$10,000 to \$100,000. The agricultural interests of that section are rapidly increasing in importance.

About a year ago the Lone Pine mines in the Vipond district, Montana, were brought to the attention of capitalists who organized a company for working them. The developments were so promising that an English syndicate was attracted by the group, and a sale was recently made to the Englishmen for \$525,000. The property consists of six claims, carrying rich veins of free milling silver ore. Some of the veins have been pretty well developed. A new ten-stamp mill is now on the ground.

The long-standing disagreement between the Sumpter Valley Railway and the Baker Valley Irrigation Company, in Baker county, Oregon, has been amicably adjusted and both companies are going ahead with their respective enterprises. This means a railroad to assist in developing the timber and mineral resources west of Baker City, and also that thousands of acres of arid land in the Powder river valley will be made susceptible of general culture.

The city assessor of Spokane Falls deserves a monument. In 1889 the valuation of taxable property in the city was \$8,700,000. According to the report of the assessor for this year the valuation of taxable property in the city is \$18,790,000. This speaks volumes for the growth of the town, inasmuch as assessment figures are likely to be greatly under rather than over actual values.

A wrought iron and wire nail factory is to be established at Whatcom, Washington, by a Chicago capitalist who has been looking over the northwest for a location. Local business men will unite with him in an incorporation capitalized at \$100,000.

Pullman, Washington, now has six artesian wells which yield about 4,000 gallons of water per minute. The water is of good quality and flows with considerable force.