

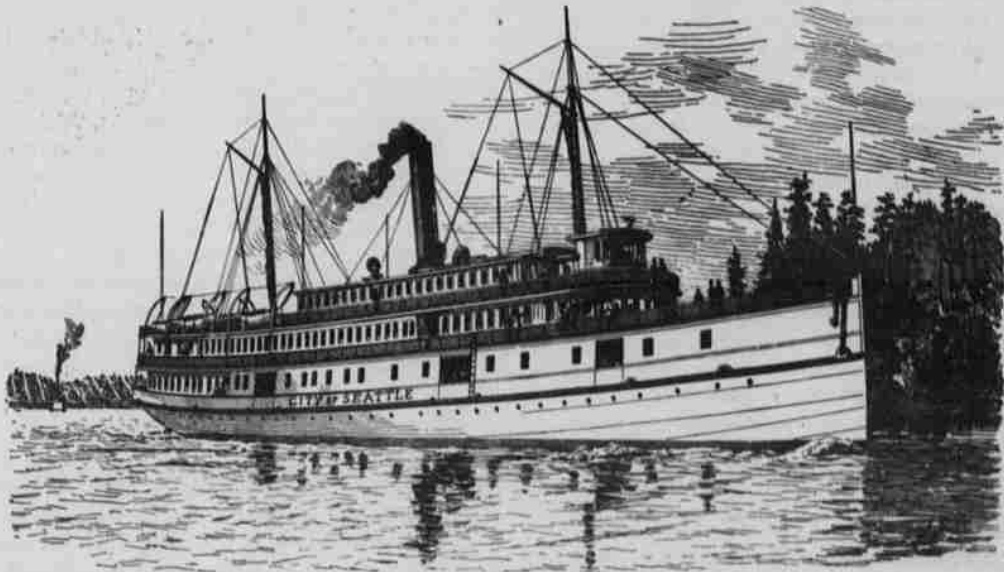
THE FRUIT INTERESTS OF THE NORTHWEST.

Ever since the pioneers first took their white topped wagons across the Rocky mountains and conquered the canyons of Snake and Powder rivers, to reduce to the plow the wilderness of the Columbia river basin, wheat has been the one staple agricultural crop. It was, to be sure, early learned that this was the natural home of all the fruits of the temperate zone, that the apple, plum, cherry and pear reached here a superior size and flavor and were produced in a quantity elsewhere unknown, and that the grape, peach, apricot and other fruits of semi-tropic climes also reached a high state of perfection, but there was no market for such products, save in a limited way, and tons of the finest quality of fruit annually rotted on the ground, while orchards that had been planted, none of them very extensive in size, were neglected and permitted to go to ruin. All that was left a few years ago of the early efforts at pomology were a few moss grown and tumble down orchards and the knowledge that as fine fruit as the world can show could be grown throughout the entire Columbia region, a term that is here used to include the lands bordering upon Puget sound and all the valleys west of the great backbone of the continent.

Less than a decade ago conditions began to change. One great overland system reached the metropolis of this region and in a short time Portland had three great transcontinental systems terminating within her limits. By this time the fruit industry of California had assumed gigantic proportions under the impulse given it by rapid transit to eastern markets, and if the Columbia

choice shipping varieties of fruit, and of prunes for drying, and bided their time until the trees should begin to produce. These orchards are now coming into good bearing condition, and the complete success of fruit culture on a large scale has been demonstrated. Larger orchards are being planted every year, and in another decade the income of this region from its fruit trees will exceed that from any other resource. The experience of California will be repeated here, though results will be more quickly attained.

While pears, apples, plums and cherries are being raised for shipment in large quantities, and while the business of supplying these delicious fruits fresh to the eastern markets in carloads, and even trainloads, at a time will increase to immense proportions, the one distinguishing feature of the business in this region has become the supplying of dried prunes to the general market. Nowhere else in the world does the prune reach such a size, richness of flavor and solidity of pulp as here, and the ability of this region to command the markets of the country is undeniable. The number of trees, chiefly of the Italian, or Fahlenberg, variety, that have been set out the past three years, or will be the next three, reaches well into the millions. Thousands of acres of land are being devoted to the culture of this one fruit, and many orchards are being set out without a single other fruit. Canneries, too, are springing up, and thousands of cases of various fruits will be placed on the general market this season. Great as this business is becoming, it is in its infancy, and offers to intelligent and energetic men an opening no other section of our common country can give. The young man who has a few dollars and will invest it in a fruit orchard here, giving the business a careful and intelligent



STEAMER "CITY OF SEATTLE."

region had then been prepared to supply fruit for shipment in carload lots it could have at once entered the field, handicapped only by the reputation California had gained, which would speedily have melted away before the superior quality of the more northern fruits. But there were no orchards of any size or in good condition.

The farmers were then urged to plant orchards immediately and be prepared to meet the great demand that would inevitably spring up; but this seed of advice fell upon stony ground. Wheat was all the farmers could see. It filled their whole horizon. To be sure they all claimed, and truly, that there was but a bare existence in raising wheat, but none the less they turned a deaf ear to all advice on the subject of fruit. They had tried fruit years ago and there was no sale for it, they answered doggedly, utterly unmindful of the revolution in transportation conditions that had taken place, or totally unable to comprehend its significance. A few started orchards, but small ones and of too great a variety of fruits. They had not enough confidence in the business to plant large orchards, nor did they understand it enough to see that a successful orchardist must be prepared to ship large quantities of the same kind of fruit, while small lots of varied kinds must be disposed of in the local market.

As in the days of old there arose a Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph," so there came to the Columbia basin men who knew not wheat, who were free from the old prejudices that bound the older settlers hand and foot, and who saw the possibilities of the fruit business. Despite the ominous predictions of those who had "tried it years ago," they planted orchards of a few

personal attention, will never regret the time he followed the westward course of the star of empire.

STEAMER "CITY OF SEATTLE."

The past few years has seen a wonderful improvement in the character of the passenger steamers plying on Puget sound. In fact, such a revolution in transportation conditions was never before witnessed. Not more than half a dozen years ago the traveler on the sound was loaded upon a little steamer that puffed, and trembled and sputtered, filling his mind with agonizing doubts as to just what particular moment she would decide to go to the bottom. A steamer that started when she was ready, either before or after the regular time, and arrived when she could. But the wonderful growth of the Puget sound cities called for better facilities, and the *Olympian*, *Premier* and others were added to the fleet, and more recently the *City of Kingston*, *Bailey Gatzert*, *Telephone* and *City of Seattle*. The latter is owned by the Puget Sound & Alaska Steamship Co., and was built especially for the sound passenger traffic. The accompanying engraving shows her beautiful lines. She has been run on the Victoria route, but at present makes the round trip between Tacoma, Seattle, Port Townsend, Anacortes, Fairhaven, Sehome and Whatcom. Other fine passenger steamers are being built, and ere long Puget sound will rival Long Island sound and the St. Lawrence in the number and elegance of her floating palaces.