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NORTH SIDE OF THE COLUMBIA.—Some few months ago, while at the mouth of the Columbia, we made a little trip of exploration, on the North side of the river, which richly repaid us for whatever of inconvenience or trouble it might have occasioned. In company with a few friends, and Captain REEVE, our excellent pilot, we crossed from Astoria on the pilot boat "Dolphin," with a sparkling breeze, through surf and breaker, to Cape Disappointment. We visited "McKenzie's Head"—a high, bold, and rocky point of land, jutting out into the sea, to the Northward of the Cape—groped our way for some three hundred yards in the midnight darkness of the cave beneath the Cape, and after climbing up on "all fours" along the face of that commanding promitory to its summit, and taking a good look seaward and landward, we descended to the general level of the land by the well-worn path that marks its rough, mossy sides.

Again on board of the pilot-boat, we "made" the head of "Baker's Bay" and the mouth of the Wallack river—a small stream, as large as the "Skipanoun," and by no means as difficult of navigation—that empties into the Bay, at "Leading-in-Cliff." We ascended the river about two miles—landed at several points, and found a most beautiful and fertile section of country, though somewhat limited in extent, stretching towards the coast. Prairie land, covered with a most luxuriant growth of grasses, where large bands of the elk and deer had left evidences of their recent presence, by the bent and matted grass where they had been feeding and reposing; while gentle elevations, crowned with groves of the spruce, crab-apple, and alder, terminated the level land, with densely wooded hills beyond.

From the little opportunity we had of examining and observing, we should say, that the north side of the river, from the Cowlitz to the ocean, is full of such desirable portions of land, most advantageous for settlement, and it will not be long before the musical ring of the settler's axe will echo and re-echo amid those hills and valleys, for their adornment with the rich fields of cultivation, and the comfortable dwellings of civilized life.

Judge SKINNER, and others, who have been some distance to the northward of Baker's Bay, represent that there is a strip of land, laying parallel to the ocean, of some four miles in width, and perhaps forty in extent, not dissimilar to Clatsop Plains; and, we have heard it asserted, much more preferable—as the soil is not as sandy as that of the Plains, and as the level of the land is not interrupted by ridges. We suppose this must be in, immediately back of Baker's and along Shoal Water Bay. If there be good land enough there to reward the settler, it will soon be made known by further exploration, and be ready for improvement. These settlements along the coast are to be of wonderful service to the country generally, in facilitating its commercial prosperity, as well as in other respects. With an interior rich in surplus products, there must be some sea-port town or towns. We shall have something more to say upon this subject, anon.

ST. HELEN'S CITY.—Although a city but in embryo, having nothing to boast of as yet, but a "splendid site," we have no doubt that it will soon be a place of considerable importance, from the fact of the natural advantages it possesses, though it may be years before it gets to be exactly a "city." The time is at hand when such points of any consequence, along the Columbia, will be improved, and spring rapidly into distinction. Wherever the operations of commerce are likely to be facilitated, there will arise the spacious ware-house, and the busy marts of trade. The great "commercial City" of Oregon, however, we think is not yet located. Time and necessity must do this, and it is as difficult, at present, to determine where that location will be, as it must have been some five or six years ago to conceive that the matted undergrowth and heavy timber about the falls of the Willamet, would so soon give place to the gardens of cultivation, and the comfortable structures attendant upon civilization.

We own no town-lots in St. Helen's City, nor are we any more interested in it, than various other places of beauty and excellence in the Willamet and Columbia valleys. We are induced to speak of it in particular, now, because our attention has been attracted to it from the fact that the discovery of coal on the Cowlitz brings it at once into notice, and greatly enhances its value. It is situated directly opposite the mouth of the Cowlitz river, and the "ship channel" passes close along its river line. The erection of ware-houses for receiving coal, and the general produce of the fertile section of country bordering on the Cowlitz, is in contemplation, as we are informed. Let St. Helen's City have a chance.

"RE-UNION" AT PORTLAND.—A most delightful 're-union' took place at Portland on Wednesday evening last, which was enjoyed by quite a gathering of both sexes. The entertainment was most excellent in every particular, and gave the happiest satisfaction.

ANOTHER EXPLORING PARTY.—We hear that Col. FORD, who is indefatigable in his efforts, has raised another party to explore the Klamet country, consisting of some 20 men. They will start in the course of a month. We wish the expedition every success.

FOR THE FREE PRESS.

AN APOLOGY FOR THE "FIFTEEN YOUNG LADIES." MR. EDITOR—

As there has been so much said out of doors respecting the immortal "fifteen young ladies," who have stepped forth to the support of their devoted country, I have thought proper to disabuse the public mind by introducing a few words by way of apology.

Whoever says that this stand upon the part of the young ladies of Oregon is uncalled for, greatly mistakes the signs of the times. It is well known that if the Bachelors could stay at home and have FULL SWING with the young ladies they would not peril their lives upon the "field of bloody strife." I need not stop to prove this point. Even the 'way-faring' fool knows it to be a fact. It follows then, that if the young ladies would permit them to do so, Oregon would soon tumble head over heels into the 'gulf of' dark despair.'

Again—some say, 'they ought to have expressed their intentions in a more mild manner—not have come out in the Governor's newspaper—striking us dumb at the outset.' Do you recollect, my faint hearted bachelor friends, that it was the full, unrestrained, thundering tones of a flock of the FEMININE GENDER that once saved Rome from a total overthrow? Had that noble, patriotic