

## EAST OF THE CASCADES.

The Fairest and Most Favored Region  
of the Earth.

### A DESCRIPTION OF ITS RESOURCES.

A Country That Offers Extra Inducements to  
the Home-Seeker, to Capital  
and to Labor.

Written for the East Oregonian.

That Eastern Oregon is a prosperous country cannot be doubted. That it has much to commend it, in every way, is apparent even to the casual observer. That it is a land that responds most generously to efforts of men, of all conditions, has been generally proven, but its agency in lifting the impoverished immigrant from want and even penury to ease, comfort and luxury—aye! to affluence—has been amply shown in the fact that nearly all those who have immigrated thither and settled within its confines were at the time of their advent men of little or no means, who have gained nearly all their possessions and added to their accumulations under the benign influences that have surrounded them in this favored land. Seek any community, and the inquirer will have pointed out to him its solid minded men, whose history plainly shows that they have, in common parlance, "made all their money here." This is the rule, rare exceptions. Then too, the mass of its citizens are all buoyant with the prospect that the future has in store for them the same good fortune, if they exhibit the same perseverance, industry and thrift, for is there a man, who displays these qualities, and has been in the country any length of time, who cannot point to the fact that his circumstances are far better than when he first "pitched his tent" upon the plains of Eastern Oregon? You would seek in vain for a country that has accomplished more for the impoverished immigrant. This may not be described as the mythical Eldorado, but it approaches as near to it as any portion of Columbia's fair domain. The writer has in mind many young men who, a few years since, were all but penniless, and who, to-day, may estimate the value of their possessions into the thousands of dollars. All acquired under the influences and circumstances that surround them here. Is not such a country worthy of being described at length, in these columns, and can your time be better spent than in perusing the description of the resources of such a country?

#### THE VARIED RESOURCES.

So varied are the resources and industries of Oregon, and so diverse is the climate in different parts of the state as to forcibly suggest its division into sections, while closely observing those lines of demarcation which the nature of the country and climate make patent. In this way has that section known as Eastern Oregon become a familiar designation for all that portion of the state lying east of the Cascade Mountains, which pass through the state north and south, and this section comprises about two-thirds of Oregon. This mountain range causes such marked difference in the climate—such distinctiveness in the seasons and such a difference in the rainfall—as to fully justify the division of the state into Eastern and Western Oregon.

The moisture of the Eastern is much less than the Western section the precipitation being less than one-half. The most rain and snow fall in the season from October to May, while there is but little rain from June to October, and for this reason ample time is afforded for harvesting of crops, which are often left standing in the fields for months at a time. During the summer months the temperature in the day is often high, but the absence of humidity, which prevails in the East, makes it seldom oppressive. The nights in summer, however, are almost invariably cool, and thus, whatever the experience of the day, the weary toiler can at night lie down to refreshing slumber, and is strengthened and invigorated for the duties of each recurring day. For a country so far north the winters are exceedingly mild. Seldom is there any extremely cold weather until the month of January. Up to that time the weather of the fall and winter months is mostly pleasant and comfortable, varied at times by cold spells in November and December, but in January there is usually a spell of severe weather, during which the thermometer falls below zero, but this continues only about three or four weeks at farthest, and in February the farmer can usually begin to plow, though in rare cases there is a cold snap in March. Snow seldom falls before the holidays, and when it falls it quickly melts and disappears. The moderating influence which causes this, is known as the "Chinook wind," which originates along the warm Japan current of the Pacific Ocean, blows inland, by way of the Columbia river basin, melting the snow at once, and overcoming the severe cold east wind. February usually brings with it mild weather and copious rains, thus demonstrating the short duration of winter. The healthfulness of Eastern Oregon is well known and on its elevated plateaus the dryness and salubrity of climate makes it much sought by those afflicted by pulmonary and other diseases.

The country east of the Cascades was practically opened to settlement by rich placer mining discoveries from 1861 to

1864, that being the only inducement then known to immigrants. The exhaustion of those placer diggings gradually developed into stock raising as a means of subsistence to those who found the climate so pleasant as to breed a desire to remain. As the result of this a few years saw immense flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and bands of horses ranging this great interior tract, which soon became known as the "Stockman's Paradise." Little was then dreamed of its perfect adaptability to wheat raising and agricultural pursuits, for stockraising was attended with such success as to retard its development in that direction. The mountain ranges afforded grazing for the summer, while the great rolling hills and plateaus covered with the famous natural "bunch grass" was reserved for winter range, the two combining with a well watered country to make it all the herd could desire. With the advent of the railroad, however, a great change began; and is now progressing rapidly to make this section one, if it is not already, the most productive agricultural regions of our immense national domain from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Where the sod of the virgin soil has been turned, and sown in other cereals, the yield has been found most satisfactory, and in many instances marvelous. Although this section, as compared with that west of the Cascades, would be considered dry, and for a long time immigrants hesitated to risk its cultivation, the soil possessed the remarkable faculty of taking up and retaining the moisture from the rains and atmosphere, thus ensuring the large crops so frequently harvested. Hence the soil of the lands in this section does not seem to require the amount of rain that is elsewhere necessary, in order to ensure crops, but in this section crops seem to grow and flourish under conditions which, if they prevailed elsewhere, would scarcely seem possible. The proof of this is found in the large yields of wheat and other grains that are a marvel to our Eastern friends.

#### SHEEP AND CATTLE.

Now, turn from the cultivation of the soil to its other resources, and we are equally astonished, at the large yield of wool from sheep that live and thrive upon the range, amounting to many millions of pounds annually, besides, these range fed sheep supply the increasing demand for mutton, and the mutton thus supplied is of fine quality. Much attention is also devoted to stock that range "upon a thousand hills," and are thrifty and in such condition as to furnish the market with choice meats. Horses are also raised in large numbers and at small expense, which, in most instances, is only incurred in branding and in salting them, and in shipping them up for shipment or sale. In this section great interest is taken in mining and many mines of gold and silver have been worked, resulting in an out-put that must convince the skeptical that this is a valuable country.

In some sections, such as Baker county, a large portion of the population are engaged in this pursuit. Baker City is the center and depot of supplies for a mining district, 120 miles long, by about 80 miles wide, covering considerable parts of Baker, Grant and Union counties. Although the mines in this section have been worked in a crude manner, they have, up to this time, produced gold to the aggregate actual value of somewhere near \$40,000,000. It can hardly be said that a district that has produced this vast sum, and in which some six or seven thousand men are engaged in profitable mining, is undeveloped. There is, of course, considerable development, but only a mere scratching of the surface as compared with the development in the older and more well-known gold mining districts. Many mines, known to be rich in ore, are not worked at all, and very few are worked by the most modern and profitable methods. The cheap and makeshift style, the poor efforts of poor men, marks the development of the mining industry.

#### THE NEED OF CAPITAL.

But while gold is found in paying quantities, there are also many mines of silver, galena, and coal scattered over nearly all the counties of Eastern Oregon. The great need is capital to sink shafts, to employ labor, to ensure transportation and other varied uses, necessary for the development of mining industries. Already the era of development is at hand. Railroads permeate this section, making it readily accessible and giving it easy and rapid communication with the rest of the world, rendering it easy to bring machinery and material to the mines, and carry the ores away. The telegraph also affords the means of quick communication. Mining men and capitalists now find that they can readily come and go, and all circumstances favor renewed activity. Miners claim that this district is exceedingly rich in gold and other minerals, and it would seem that there must be a vastly greater development in the near future.

#### OUR BEAUTIFUL VALLEYS.

Would that we could find space to complete the description of Eastern Oregon, but to do so would require a volume of no small proportions. The enthusiasm of the poet or gifted writer or orator would surely be aroused, were he to visit and behold the beauty and substantial resources of the Grande Ronde valley, in Union county, the Powder River valley, the valley of the Umatilla and

other streams in Umatilla county and numerous other sections, which are divided into farms and ranches, where crops and stock are raised in abundance, and as the years glide by, permanent and substantial improvements multiply, as well as those that tend to the comfort of the land-owner and adds to the beauty of his surroundings.

The immigrant passing through this country by rail can obtain no adequate idea of this section from what he may see along the lines of the railroads, for the reason that the greatest development is not to be found contiguous to the road beds. Let him, however, step off the train, at any thriving town, or village, and investigate what is the basis of the prosperity he finds there and he will be convinced that he may well pause before he determines to seek farther—for if he determines to move on, he is most likely, as has been so often demonstrated, to "go farther and fare worse."

#### THE CLIMATE.

of Eastern Oregon is bracing and seems to infuse new life and energy into all that come under its influence, hence the activity, push and enterprise that seems to inspire its citizens, young and old, and nearly all seem to catch this spirit, and thus the car of progress is pushed rapidly forward. Life here may be described as much faster and more furious, so to speak, than those are accustomed to who hail from the East, and it may safely be said that we live and accomplish more in one year, in this section, than we would in five years, in the East. Our friends that inhabit the Atlantic states can hardly understand or credit this, but let them visit us, for "seeing is believing."

Capitalists, whom no description by letter could induce to invest here, frequently visit us, and so struck are they with the many features of this fast developing country that they become infused with our western spirit, and reason that a country with such enthusiastic settlers, such rapid development, and so many features to commend it must be a good and safe place for their investments; hence our lands and securities of all kinds are being eagerly sought by these careful and judicious observers.

This paper is in sympathy with the patient miners on Greenhorn and other mineral sections of Grant county, says the Grant County News, who will spend the long winter developing quartz mines, while they live alone and fry their solitary flapjacks over the blaze of a pine knot. Verily, they are the forerunners of Grant county's prosperity.

## OUR OWN FAIR LAND.

Umatilla First Among the Counties of  
Eastern Oregon,

### AND THE FOURTH IN THE STATE.

Soil, Climate, Products, Natural Wealth,  
Schools, Markets, Railroads,  
Future Prosperity.

Written for the East Oregonian.

In our own county of Umatilla we find that the march of progress has taken rapid strides, and development is increasing year by year. It is a county of vast and varied resources, which are becoming better appreciated as they are more nearly understood and as we become more intimately acquainted with them.

#### THE HEALTHFULNESS.

of the climate is beyond question, and where sickness exists, it can nearly always be traced to the habits of the individual and his disobedience of the laws of sanitation, and not to local causes inherent in the country. For what else could a pure, bracing atmosphere and invigorating climate produce, other than health, where the individual observes the simplest rules of hygiene.

This county has hardly been settled long enough to produce a large crop of old men, yet there are to be met, men vigorous and strong who have passed the age of "three score and ten," and some that have attained four score years and are enjoying "a green old age." Under the influence of climate the energy and strength of men seem to be largely increased, and they are capable of enduring more and accomplishing more than elsewhere.

The origin and extent of Umatilla county may be thus described: All that part of Oregon, east of the Cascade mountains was, for sometime after Oregon became a state, but one county, known as "Wasco." After while all the territory east of the present boundaries of Gilliam and Crook counties was divided off to form Umatilla county. In other words, the county was carved from Old Wasco and Umatilla counties, until there are now fourteen counties in Eastern Oregon, as follows: Wasco, Sherman, Crook, Klamath, Grant, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Gilliam, Harney, Baker, Union, Wallowa and Umatilla.

Of these, we believe, it will not be disputed, that Umatilla county is far richer and more productive and populous than any of the others, and the most favored in every way. We do not say this boastfully, for we would gladly see substantial progress in all of them, and everything indicates this to be inevitable; but, so patent are the large and varied resources and advantages of Umatilla county, that none need hesitate or have any misgivings in making a home within its confines.

In describing its advantages much must be necessarily said that has often been told before, but it must be recalled that there is a wide-spread interest among strangers, who are continually writing to make inquiries upon the very points upon which this article treats, and what we shall say will contain no exaggerations, for to write the truth must prove sufficiently attractive. While we say this, we would not convey the idea that everyone that has settled here is satisfied and content, for there are certain dissatisfied people in every community, however favored, who will find something that does not suit their tastes, or that imagine evils that do not exist—restless beings, who are ever on the move, and denounce the country wherever they may be, because, forsooth, "Man is not rained down from heaven," or "gold dollars do not grow upon trees," and thus ensure them ease and comfort without labor—chronic grumblers and "calamity shriekers" valuable only as an example for others to avoid, who would devote their time and energies to the best advantage. Such a class are not desirable, and in a new, progressive

country like this, there is no place for them. But this article is intended for the perusal of those, who are willing to take their places in the army of toilers and seize the opportunities that are presented on every hand.

The dawn of the real progress and development of this country is in fact just at hand, for only of late, have transportation facilities approximated the demand, and the attention of capitalists been drawn to our extensive and substantial advantages and resources.

A few days since, while seated in our office, one of Umatilla county's most prosperous farmers entered, and in the course of conversation, we asked him what he thought of Umatilla county. To this, he replied, in his bluff, positive manner—"It is the best country I ever saw"—and, he then went on to say that he had been in many states, but had found none that possessed the advantages of this section. He then proceeded to show what the young men in his immediate family had accomplished, and out of some three sons and some-in-laws, who are quite young, there was not one that was not worth from \$5,000 to \$10,000 or more, all made in this county, in a few years, and all these men are farmers. This farmer came to Umatilla county with a little money, which he has increased so largely that no one who knows his circumstances would gainsay the statement that he is now worth \$100,000, and there are many other substantial farmers, in the county, who are worth many thousands each; all due to the advantages that surround them in Umatilla county. We, however, have no men of immense wealth here; no Goulds; no Vanderbilts; no Rockefellers, and very few that are worth much more than \$100,000 each, yet these are sufficient evidence of the resources of this county, for notwithstanding the fact that this is, as yet, a new and undeveloped country they have amassed their fortunes right here in this county.

Taking results as our criterion, it must be acknowledged that Umatilla county is one of the fairest and most favored regions of the earth, and is destined to be one of the wealthiest, most prosperous and populous sections of the United States. The writer is engaged in an active business, in the county, which brings him in daily contact with all classes of men, and he is in a position to specially observe and note the material resources of the county, and it is with no desire to boom the country or boast of its resources that these lines are penned, but simply to speak the truth as it represents itself to him.

Umatilla county is on the northern border of Oregon, and is separated from Idaho on the east, by Wallowa and Union counties. Its northern boundary is the southern state line of Washington, and the Columbia river, Union and Grant counties bound it on the south and Morrow county on the west. Up to 1885 the last named county was a part of Umatilla.

In round numbers, Umatilla county has about ninety townships, about 2,073,600 acres or 3,240 square miles.

Some of the county is mountainous, such as that which includes the territory traversed by the Blue Mountains, which are in the eastern and southern portions of the county. There is also along the northern edge of the county, on the Columbia river, a strip of sandy land, which would require irrigation to adapt it to agriculture. These lands, comprising probably twenty-five townships, in all, are not sought for purposes of agriculture, though most of them are used as range for stock. After deducting these, the remainder, about sixty-five townships, is fine agricultural land and

is a large proportion of it of extraordinary fertility, and which can scarcely be equaled and certainly not surpassed anywhere in the United States. Thus, the lands of the county may be said to be comprised under three heads: Mountainous, sandy land and agricultural land. The mountainous portion of the county is exceedingly valuable, for besides being used for grazing purposes, it supplies timber for building, fencing and fuel, and in many parts, when cleared, grows timothy hay to perfection, in fact, timothy grass grows wild in many places on the mountains, especially in that section tributary to Meacham, a station in the eastern part of the county on the O. R. & N. R. R. Within this mountain district there are probably over 500,000 sheep kept and grazed every year. In this mountain range, saw-mills are located and manufacture lumber and shingles, for which there is great demand, they being shipped and hauled to the prairies, together with quantities of fencing material and fire-wood. The demand for these must go on increasing for the tributary country is mostly composed of prairies. These mountains can, in most every direction, be traversed by horse, and in many directions by wagon and team. Nor is the strip along the Columbia river worthless. It is sandy land covered with sage-brush, but produces an early fine grass, very nutritious affording pasturage to many cattle and other stock. It is said, when cultivated and irrigated, to be well adapted to the production of cereals, especially wheat. Between the boundaries of the rugged foothills and the belt of sandy lands lies the great grain producing portion of the county, probably nearly 1,500,000 acres.

Along the mountains the agricultural lands are considerably broken and rough, and bordering upon the sandy region,

the soil is lighter than elsewhere, and more subject to drought and, therefore, not so productive as that which lies farther back. Passing over those portions touched upon above, Umatilla county may be described generally as an elevated, rolling plain or plateau. Such would be its appearance from a distant bird's-eye-view. On closer acquaintance, however, it is found considerably broken, and indented with numerous small canyons or gulches, mostly dry, except when melting snows convert them into temporary stream beds.

Here, then, is the southwestern portion of the great "Columbia Basin." Between the wooded hills and the great river of the northwest lies this fair and fertile land, "the heart of the 'Inland Empire,'" the soil and climate of which have attracted so many already who have turned their steps hitherward, and which will attract thousands more when their qualities are more widely known.

The soil is indeed a wonder to all strangers, and it is difficult for them to believe at first that the land of such appearance as this is capable of raising anything, much less such wonderful crops as are really grown. In a part of the country, it is true, the soil, when moist, presents a dark, rich appearance, and this is really the best; but further from the mountains, where it is scarcely lighter and is looser and finer, it is scarcely less productive. In summer, when no rain has fallen for several weeks, perhaps, it is so dry on the surface, so light and parched in appearance, that a stranger, unacquainted with its qualities, would at once pronounce it utterly useless. But he need only wait till harvest for abundant proof of the maxim that "appearances are deceptive."

This region was once a sea-bed. Again, it was a chaos of ice and rocks. Again, it was deluged with an overflow of lava, in some places hundreds of feet in depth. It has been deluged with flood; it has been parched with rainless summers; it has been swept with the belching of volcanoes; it has been scarred and chiseled and ground with monstrous icebergs. In all these operations of nature, filling countless ages of time, the soil was being prepared for the use and abode of man; and it would seem that something in the nature of the materials of which it is composed, or in the manner of the composition, render it of fertility not surpassed, and scarcely equaled, anywhere on the globe. One marked feature of this soil is its capacity for retaining moisture, so that when, after some weeks without rain, the surface seems parched with drought, the soil a few inches below will be moist; and grain will be found growing green and rank, and later, ripening into a bountiful harvest, when, under similar climatic conditions in many localities any plants would have shriveled and starved for lack of water.

This is a "new country" yet. By this we mean that the soil is just forming upon the bedrock of the Basin. In many places the rock is indeed yet uncovered, and the process of soil-forming has scarcely begun. The immigrant passes through much of this sort of country on his way hither, especially over the Northern Pacific. In other localities the new soil, formed during comparatively recent ages, is not yet more than five, six, ten or twenty feet deep. Whenever it is of any such depth, it is wonderfully productive. But Umatilla county, as well as all other portions of the Columbia Basin, has considerable territory where the soil is not of yet sufficient depth to be fit for agriculture. These are valuable for pasturage, being generally covered with bunchgrass, for which purpose they should be used, rather than in vain attempts at farming.

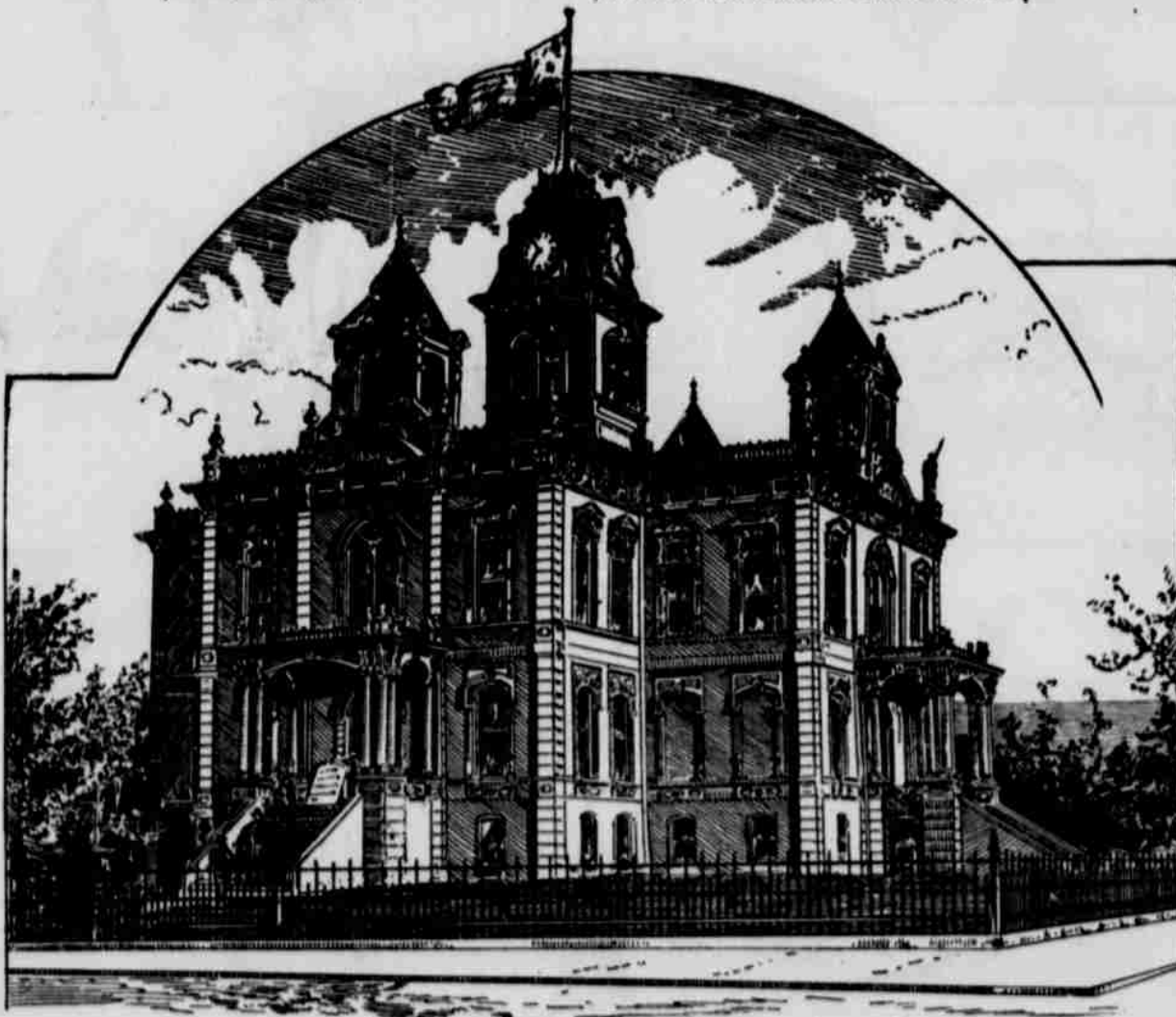
The prairies of Umatilla county are not as well watered as might be desired, yet there are a number of small streams, and no locality is far from these. The principal streams are the Wallowa and Umatilla rivers, and Wild Horse, Birch, Butter, and other creeks. On the up-lands abundant springs are also frequently found. The streams are bordered by a growth of cottonwood or balsam, and other trees supplying fuel and fencing material to those living along the banks of the streams. Most of the settlers upon the prairies have to depend on the mountains for their wood, hauling it a distance of from five to forty miles. The timber of the Blue mountains is mostly of pine and tamarack.

Climate is the main thing considered by most emigrants. Many of them having experienced the cyclones and miasmatic influences of other states, scarcely credit the reports of the healthfulness and equability of this section. Exaggerations may even have reached them, but the plain truth is sufficient to commend this section.

We seldom have any severe cold until the latter part of December, and rarely after about the 20th of January, though sometimes there is cold weather in February and even March, but usually, the farmer is running his plough or sowing in February.

In the mountains the spirit thermometer sometimes records as low as 40 or 45 degrees below zero, but this only occurs for a night or two, and during the same time, in the settled portions of the county, the thermometer only marks about 25 or 30 degrees below zero. But notwithstanding this low range of the thermometer during one or two days of the winter, it may truthfully be said that there are but few days in winter, in which the thermometer drops as low as zero, and owing to the dryness of the atmosphere, people do not suffer from the cold as they do in damper localities. The extent of cold weather here is about five or six weeks, and often not over three or four. Sometimes, we pass through the entire winter without any really cold weather, as in the winter of 1888-9. Winters usually break early, and the February of this climate is most frequently, similar to April, and March is similar to the month of May in Illinois or New York. Snows frequently fall in winter, but the "Chinook winds" to which we have alluded, soon take these away, and the air becomes as mild and pleasant as spring.

Though in summer the weather is not usually oppressive warm, we have a few hot days, but we do not suffer from the heat, as one would in climates where



COURT HOUSE BUILDING—UMATILLA COUNTY.

#### Irrigating Barren Wastes.

Cotemporary with Secretary Noble's recommendation that the plan of irrigating our waste and arid lands be pushed forward, reports come from various sections that indicate active local movement in the same direction. A thorough system of irrigation that would efficiently and systematically water barren wastes, says the Eugene City Times, which only need moisture to make them fertile, would be of incalculable benefit to this country. There are exhausted stores of water on and in the earth and the only difficulty is in providing the means for properly distributing and utilizing it on the surface.

Secretary Noble reports there are 597,644,783 acres of vacant lands in the United States. It is estimated that at least 300,000,000 acres of these lands are useless for agriculture, but that 120,000,000 that are desert may be reclaimed by irrigating so as to produce the cereals, fruits and grain produce possible in the climate where the lands are located.

A coal discovery was recently made in the neighborhood of Mt. Vernon. An eight-foot ledge has been disclosed to view, and as far as has been tested the quality of coal was excellent. Mr. McKean, the proprietor of the Baker and Canyon City mail route, has been taking considerable interest in the new discovery, using his efforts to organize a joint stock company to develop the property.

A pocket in a vein of quartz in the Black Hills, Oregon, in two days yielded \$200 in gold. Such a pocket would be very desirable in a winter overcoat, but the tailors don't seem to be in the right vein.

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country like this, there is no place for them. But this article is intended for the perusal of those, who are willing to take their places in the army of toilers and seize the opportunities that are presented on every hand.