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A MONTANA CITY.

The evolution of the North American city may be studied to better advantage along this route than anything else. We touch towns at every stage of development.

The youngest settlements are on the newest part of the line, and that is on the west slope of the Rockies, between Terra Firma and Missoula. Here you survey the town in its earliest infancy. There is a railroad station with a name and a siding and nothing further. A canvas-top wagon stands near the track. Four horses or mules are tethered close by. The settler has driven stakes and pitched a comfortable tent, large enough to contain two black walnut bedsteads, a table and other furniture. His wife sits in a rocking chair near the flap, watching the train as it passes. From two to a half-dozen youngsters are tumbling around in the sun. The cook stove is outdoors, with such other property as cannot be stored in the tent. The citizen himself is not far off, hard at work already upon the frame of the building in which he expects to make his permanent residence. Then comes another wagon with more household furniture and children. The location of the second tent as in relation to the first perhaps determines the bearings of the main business street of the city. By the time there are three or four wagons on the ground, and two or three frame buildings in process of construction, another sort of tent appears as if by magic, with "Saloon" in big letters across the front. Cowboys begin to ride in and buy whisky. The town becomes a point of commercial importance. The saloon tent is the germ of the future board of trade.

Now we get by rapid strides to well established communities, which date their origin ten or twelve months back, like Gladstone and Dickerson, in Dakota, and Billings and Livingstone in Montana. If built on the prairie they look like toy villages arranged by a child on a brownish yellow carpet. The prairie towns of Dakota have a more orderly and at the same time a less real appearance than the valley settlements of the neighboring territory. It seems indiscreet to leave them out at night on the wild-swept plain.

The first street is always parallel with the railroad track, extending each way from the station. The second street runs off at right angles, and if the growth of the town continues it usually in time becomes the more important highway. Other streets are laid out, right and left, shanties and brick buildings spring up side by side, and in a few months the real estate agent is prepared to exhibit a city map, plotted on a scale that would suit a place with 20,000 inhabitants, and to give you your choice of town lots at from \$25 to \$2,000 apiece. It is only about a year since the first house was erected in Billings. Now there are nearly 500 houses, and the population is well up to 2,500. It has a brick church, a bank, several schools, three newspapers, three hotels, and a horse railroad. Statistics of population, however, are of trifling value in towns that double their inhabitants in a few weeks or a few months.

The social and business development of the town generally follows in this order: Saloons, stores in which the necessities of life are sold, gambling establishments, daily newspapers, school houses, a bank, a church, a wholesale store, a jail. For a time the sa-

loons and the newspapers struggle for numerical supremacy. The appearance of the jail marks a distinct epoch in the crystallization of society. The jail at Livingston, the newest of the cities, was just finished, and had no inmates. It is a one-story structure of brick and stucco, standing next door to a log house with red shades in the windows and this sign over the door: "Miss Crickett's Palace." The jail at Bozeman, which is comparatively an old place, contained twenty-seven prisoners, seven of whom were held for murder.—*Villard Excursionist in N. Y. Sun.*

Result of the Conference.

Rates from the east to Portland and San Francisco shall be the same, as well as those from San Francisco and Portland east by either route. All goods or passengers travel to Portland from the east by way of the Southern or Central Pacific road shall go by the Northern Pacific company's steamers, and the water tariff shall be paid by the Southern roads out of the regular rates received. The Northern Pacific thus secures the water tariff on all Portland-bound goods. Eastern bound canned goods from Astoria are to be carried from Portland by way of the Central and Southern roads at the same rate as by the Northern Pacific direct. All goods and passengers from the California roads to Seattle, Tacoma and other points on Puget Sound, are to go by the Northern Pacific's steamships, and pay to the company's ships the regular water tariff from San Francisco or Portland, in addition to the regular rates to those places, and all trade with other points reached by the Northern Pacific Railroad is to pay rates fixed by that road. The Northern Pacific, therefore, retains exclusive control of the trade of Oregon and Washington Territory, with the exception of east bound canned goods from Astoria and the Portland trade. But in California outside of San Francisco, the Northern Pacific is at liberty to seek trade in any port that can be reached by its steamships, and it is agreed that its goods can be shipped to any point on the California railroads by adding the regular open tariff rates. In the case of places which have both water and rail communications, the extra freight from the east by the Northern Pacific will not, it is expected, be very great. In all cases of goods between San Francisco and Astoria, the Northern Pacific gets compensation for water carriage.

It was also agreed that all rates are to remain as at present, and there will be no change in the business of the other roads, everything maintaining as it has been heretofore, the conference leaving simply fixed the status of the Northern Pacific. All contracts now existing shall be maintained, and shippers under contract shall have the option of shipping over any of the overland lines, the Northern Pacific giving issued bills of lading covering the entire water transit. There shall be no rebates allowed, no commissions given, and no passes granted for trade purposes.

It is thus seen that there can be no competition between the different transcontinental roads in the matter of fares and freights, no reductions or rebates being allowed, and the rates being fixed for Portland and San Francisco. It now remains for the Northern Pacific to compete with the other roads in the matter of time and service. In these respects it is probable that the other roads will

find a lively competition, and as time is money, the public may obtain its advantage in that valuable commodity. The average time that freight is on the road from the east is not far from four weeks; but the Northern Pacific will run regular freight trains between St. Paul and Portland in seven days and one-half. This will secure them the traffic of the east with Oregon, Washington Territory and northern regions. This is doubtless correct, unless the southern roads run their freight trains faster than ten miles an hour, and it is probable that shippers will save the interest on their money by shipping over the Northern Pacific. This northern road will prove to be, in this respect, a formidable competitor to the southern roads, even in winter.

Lost River, Idaho, is a hydraulic curiosity. The *Idaho Statesman* says of it: The stream is larger than Wood river, and flows with a good current between firm and solid banks until it reaches the lava plains, where it has heretofore been thought to disappear in the rock. This has, however, been found to be an error, as the course of the stream can be easily traced some twenty miles further, flowing through a cleft in the lava, having changed its course to the northeast, and at last flowing close to the foothills, sinks in an open sagebrush plain. Some twenty-five miles beyond Arco, which is situated in the lower part of the Lost River Valley, is what is known as Little Lost river.—This stream also ends its course by being lost, or sunk in the lower plains.

Judge Swan, who has passed some months on Queen Charlotte island in the interest of the United States fish commission, returned to Victoria on Wednesday. He reports the discovery of a new inlet on one of the Queen Charlotte group, which offers a harbor of refuge to fishing and merchant vessels. Mr. Swan also reports the discovery of a new food fish, which he calls the black cod. He says it is one of the finest fish he has ever seen. It is caught in great numbers by dredging in deep water, and when salted is more tender and palatable than codfish. Great quantities of whales and fur seal are seen off the group.

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