

PRAIRIE CITY POINTS.

Other Things of Interest than
Lands and Mines.

Last week THE MINER published an article on the natural resources of the John Day valley and the bordering mountains tributary to Prairie City. That region has other features of even more interest than its fertile soil and rich mines, to one who is not an avowed dollar worshiper.

Prairie City is typical of the region. It is an old, sleepy looking camp, surrounded by slumbering possibilities. Its citizens are all old timers; many of them having come there thirty and more years ago with the first placer mining rush, others having been drawn into the valley by the population vacuum occasioned when the stampede to other diggings occurred. These latter came in to farm and have grown rich. There are people there, natives, from twenty to twenty-five years of age, who have never seen a railroad train.

Being removed so far from what is popularly considered "the world," these good people are somewhat provincial in their ways. The impartial, shrewd observer will conclude that close contact with the world does not improve either the character or the mind. These people are a whole lot better and just as "smart" as those who have lived on electric car lines and read nothing staler than thirty minute old newspapers all their lives. Yet they furnish some amusement and a great deal of entertainment for those who drift into this mountain-fenced Utopia for a few days. When a stranger is introduced to a resident on the streets of Prairie City, the proper thing to do is to stand there and talk for an indefinite period. And when the interview closes, if the "old resident" doesn't know the visitor's politics and religion, there is suspicion lurking in his curious mind.

What in the prairie states is called a "cow boy," but is here a "stockman," is largely in evidence. He is accoutered in every respect, except one, as is the cow boy of romance. The John Day gentleman who looks after cattle—very probably which he owns himself—does not wear constantly a six-shooter. In this as in other respects to which this absence of the gun is an index, he is a great improvement over his brother a few hundred miles further east.

There is one striking resemblance between them, however; they are both fond of and loyal to the great American game of poker. Here that king of all gambling and amusement devices has not been superseded by those degenerate games of solo and twenty-one. Nor do these cattlemen and miners slip into some private room and exchange reds, whites and blues behind a locked door. On the contrary, they gather around a table in a hotel lobby, pile up their soft and hard money in front of them and play an honest, friendly game, with the blue sky as a limit, play until broad day light and feel as if no excuse is necessary to be offered to any living being.

Your miner man and the owner of large herds of fat cattle, having the money with which to pay for the good things of this world, in order to protect himself, has learned to distinguish between the good, bad and indifferent. Therefore it is, that in Prairie City saloons excellent old whiskey is served over the bars. Customers would not tolerate for a moment any attempt to degrade the quality of this popular staple.

Formerly all freight was hauled in from Columbia river points. During recent years, it has come from the outside to Baker City on the O. R. & N. and

hauled from that point in wagons. The building of the Sumpter Valley road, which would save a wagon haul of thirty miles, has not changed this custom. It is probably the only case in the world where freight is hauled a distance of thirty miles in wagons over bad roads, rather than have it shipped on a railroad. The reason for this is the stupidity of the management of this road of narrow gauge and policy. The rate from Baker City to Prairie City, a distance of seventy miles, is 75 cents a hundred. From Baker City to Sumpter, a distance of thirty-one or thirty-two miles, is about 35 cents a hundred. So it will be seen that the wagon freight rate is the cheaper of the two. The shorter haul of forty-two miles from Sumpter to Prairie City cannot be made for the difference of 40 cents a hundred, so the freight wagons work their slow, laborious way over the range to Baker City, thirty odd miles away. Did anybody ever hear of a case of thicker headed meanness?

This being the condition of affairs, the people over there do not love the Sumpter Valley road, and they declare with strange, vigorous oaths that they much prefer not to have any railroad at all, than this "slim gauge streak of rust." This one proposition is a sure thing: If this logging road extension ever descends from the timber lands of the mountains down into the John Day valley, it will have to pay town lot prices for its right of way. One other statement is equally true; no jury to condemn a right of way will ever be empanelled that will give this Utah company the best of any deal.

Fluctuations in Mining Stocks.

That the present slump in mining securities is general throughout the country is noticed by the Denver Mining Record, and it, at the same time, makes a plea for optimism in this regard. It mentions the fact that while the Colorado stock market is flat and inactive, the mines of the state were never in better condition, the activity of the market having little seeming relation to that of the mines. This is equally true here. Hardly an instance can be cited where mines of this territory are not looking more promising than ever before, yet stock values have been halved, quartered and even more finely divided within the last 12 months. The Record's explanation of this—that boom and slumps follow each other in irregular periods without apparent cause, except the incidental influence of small things—is all the explanation that can be given. The season of the year has been against investment, elections are approaching, and there have been local delays to discourage the investor, yet these influences can not account for the astonishingly quiet condition of the last month or two. Nevertheless there is no ground for pessimism. The other extreme will come as surely as this one did, and there are many signs that it is not far off.—Spokesman-Review.

Own Good Mines in the Greenhorn.

Frank Duprat, John Seibert and George Darveau returned at one o'clock this morning from their trip to their mining properties in Greenhorn mountains, Grant county. They started out last Tuesday, went by rail to Sumpter, thence by stage to Lawton, and from there by private conveyance. Mr. Duprat has been doing work on some of their claims there for twelve years. He had specimens of rich ore with him this morning, which were obtained from the carbonate claim where the vein is cross-cut by a tunnel 44 feet in length, at a depth of 135 feet. The vein is 18 feet wide and nearly perpendicular. Mr. Duprat says that considerable activity is being displayed in that section of the country. He states that early last fall there was scarcely the sign of a cabin where Alamo now is, seven miles southwest of Granite. Now there are 100 cabins there and the owners thereof are doing all kinds of mining development work.—East Oregonian.

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