

AT THE GATEWAY

By E. L. THORPE.

Gresham, besides being the metropolis of eastern Multnomah, also enjoys the distinction of being the gateway to Mount Hood, and one end of the loop that will encircle that snow-clad peak when it shall have been finished. Here, too, is at least one of the portals to the wonderful Columbia River Highway. This scenic wonder of the continent may be approached by feeders leadings from Portland on the Sandy, Base Line and Section Line roads. One of them the latter, passes through Gresham and is the shortest from Portland anywhere south of the Hawthorne bridge. All three are needed and will help to make tourist travel through this section the more interesting. Then, too, the autoist may choose his route and traverse the country between the city and the Sandy river by going one way and returning by another.

Of the three incorporated towns in eastern Multnomah, Gresham is the largest and most important. As there are but four cities in the county including Portland, it is not to be disputed that this one can claim all other distinctions, for in the other two, Troutdale and Fairview, there is no industrial spirit at work, although they are both enterprising in their social and home-like way. It remains for Gresham to be the civic center of this section, and as such she will remain, unless some circumstance of enterprise and capital shall take away her prestige and divert the channels of industry elsewhere.

But there is another thought suggested, or rather emphasized, by the close unity that exists between the different sections represented by the Outlook as a purveyor of news from one community to another. The men and women who came here years ago and developed this part of the country are passing away. Some of them have already gone but their influence lives yet in those who are alive today, and through them have been "knit together in one communion of fellowship" the influences set in motion sixty years or more ago.

Thus the past is brought directly and vitally into the present. Those of today may, and do, through sympathy with those who wrought valiantly and with affection for them, enter into a real fellowship with the past that is still linked to the present by the living bonds of those who yet survive and can look backward to the pioneer days, and forward to what seems to be a great and glorious destiny.

Probably not more than a dozen can remember Multnomah county of sixty years ago; perhaps fewer than a hundred, unless they were born here, can remember it fifty years ago. In the earlier days mentioned there was an almost unbroken wilderness here, with only a few log houses at the end of trails leading through the trees. It was quite a contrast to the improvements and culture of today, but those who can remember fifty years back can realize now that there had been very little gain in the ten years between, except in the number of people and the few more log houses with their patches of clearing from which a living was wrested under the stress of toil and privation.

One hundred and ten years ago the expedition of Lewis and Clark camped within a few miles of Gresham. Those of the early settlers who came here and opened up the wilderness, then almost unnamed, surrounding their camping ground, have been here more than half the period since 1805. That expedition attracted great attention at the time, and it has scarcely been exceeded in romantic interest by later exploitations in any quarter of the globe. The members of the exploration party were given large land grants by a grateful government, but it is a pity that those grants could not have been given to them right here, so that they might have become the real pioneers who settled this country, instead of those who followed the trail they blazed and took their choice of any attractive spots that pleased their fancies.

But even though this part of Oregon was taken up chiefly as donation land claims by the pioneers of the mid-century, there was much government land still vacant for the later arrivals of fifty years ago as is evidenced by the numerous homestead holding, some of which yet remain in their original owners' names or belong to their children.

As late as thirty years ago there

were homestead filings in this vicinity. Then came the railroads across the very same mountains traversed by Lewis and Clark and the pioneer settlers. With their advent real progress began, and it has never ceased its onward march. It will march along with the coming years—

And to us is given this heritage
The children of pioneers,
Who first saw it sleeping in beauty
And wakened its slumber of years,
They are passing away from our visions,
And laid 'neath the cedars to rest;
Their tolls are all o'er, but they've left us
A home and a grave in the west.

Here, where Gresham stands today, was more than sixty years ago the wayside camping ground of the Indians who passed along the trail that led from the banks of the Willamette river to the Cascade mountains. It was a narrow, sinuous pathway through the virgin forest, then untouched, and its course may yet be traced in many places. Powell Valley road, so lately improved with a bituminous surface, follows many of the windings of the old Indian trail, which explains its almost serpentine course. Here, at the point later designated by the first white men who followed it thither, was found the "bend in the creek" and here they also camped. It was the first watering place after leaving the Willamette—a fit place for a settlement—and here they squatted, made their homes in the wilderness and opened up the land claims that were afterward theirs by the act of congress—the donation land claims. Gresham covers a fraction of three such donations.

The "bend in the creek" is there yet, a horseshoe of water that sometimes flows in limpid blue and then again in turbulent fury. At a point not more than fifty yards from where the Powell fountain now stands was a crystal spring high above the creek but flowing into it. The water from the spring was clear and pure and cold and furnished the beverage that cooled the parched lips when the heat of summer had turned the waters of the shallow stream into a tasteless, but then uncontaminated sewer of the forests.

With that spring, the fertile soil and the beautiful expanse of woodland scenery, is it to be wondered at that such a spot should be chosen for the site of the future metropolis of eastern Multnomah?

That winding stream afterwards became known as Johnson creek and such it will probably remain. Not a classical name to be sure—not so

beautiful in sound as the Bonnie Doon or the Blue Danube, or the Ayr of Bobbie Burns, but it too shall be embalmed in poetry:

AT THE BEND IN THE CREEK.

Thou restless, never-ling stream
That onward flows in ceaseless race—
I stand by thee as in a dream,
And mark how time can change thy face.

I think of summers that have flown,
Of bright dreams only born to die,
That on his wings old Time has borne
Without a thought or parting sigh.
My thoughts go back, I stand upon
Thy mossy bank, 'Tis evening's hour,
When sky and earth seem blending near,
When rocks and hills, and tree and flower,

Are wrapt in dewy, mellow light,
Awaiting the starry, silent night.

The grand old forest, far away,
The vapory clouds below the moon,
The little town so still and white,
Hid by the stars and by the night—
Each dear spot crowned by the falling gloom
Has left its shade in my heart—a tomb!

With awe I gaze upon the scene,
And half forget the days gone by;
Days when another with me stood—
And memory fades, too, with a sigh.
This old-time scene weighs down my heart,
My willing feet by the water's edge,
Turn to the wave-washed, pebbly shore,
The wave-washed, drifting, drift-wood hedge.

Below my feet the waters swirl,
As lives they seem, of human kind;
Their music steals into my soul
And gives the calm I ne'er else find.
I feel upon the rippling waves,
Each rushing wildly to the sea;
They seem to mock all human strife,
And dare the great eternity.

And voiceless, words my fancy bears
And one form there in memory stands—
Unworthy oft our idol proves
And turns to ashes in our hands.
How fair seemed life, how sweet and pure
That youthful love so holy then,
The past seems but a fairy dream,
And death hangs o'er what might have been.

The years go by, I stand again,
As in that summer long ago;
I view my shattered hopes, and then
Forgive the fate that willed it so.

And as of yore the waves still moan
And dash their spray upon the strand,
And still the sea of life rolls on
With buried hopes in drifting sand.

"Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that's still,"
Is my heart's lone cry, as swirling by,
I am mocked by the murmuring rill.

The mileage of railways in Europe increased from 206,987 in 1910 to 212,651; in America from 326,357 to 343,643; in Asia from 63,188 to 66,534; in Africa from 22,850 to 26,491; in Australia from 19,229 to 21,578, and in the world from 638,611 to 670,997.

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