

A SPLENDID COUNTRY.

How Irrigation Has Wrought Its Perfect Work in the Yakima Country.

The Volcanic Ash—A Chemical Problem—The Moxee Model Farm—Profits Well Invested.

Special Correspondence of the St. Louis Globe Democrat.

NORTH YAKIMA, Wash., Sept. 11th.—There are twenty miles of irrigation ditches in this little city of 3,000 people. These ditches completely encircle every block, making it an island. They are owned by the city. When a man buys a lot the right to free use of water from the ditch in front of him goes with the title. City officers regulate the distribution of this water as in other municipalities they look after the ash barrels and the garbage. Citizens say the system works smoothly and satisfactorily. One can stand in the center of the city and look in four directions a mile or more, down avenues which shade trees growing thickly along both sides of the roadway. This is more than can be said of any other four-year-old settlement in the arid belt of the United States. No rain has fallen here for months. The people do not remember when the last shower occurred. They have no particular interest in speculations as to when the next shower will come. They do not bore the visitor with an array of statistics designed to bolster up a theory that the rainfall is increasing. They are in the arid belt, and don't care how firmly that is impressed upon everybody who comes along. Between the Yakima country and the coast, with its damp winds and abundant rainfall, rises the Cascade range as a barrier to the surcharged clouds. The Yakima people have no desire to reason that barrier out of existence. They are independent of the clouds. They are wholly dependent upon irrigation.

Irrigation in the Yakima country means something more than furnish moisture to the growing vegetation. It implies chemical changes in the soil. Mr. L. S. Howlett, who was editor of the Louisville Commercial for ten years, and who came west about five years ago, resides upon one of the best improved suburban homes of North Yakima. He says: "I consider this Yakima valley the most fertile land known. The soil is peculiar. It is a kind of a volcanic ash. Combined with water it fertilizes itself. There is enough alkali always arising to restore, with the help of the water, all of the loss from the heavy crops which are produced. That is the principle. The water combines with the properties peculiar to this volcanic ash and the result is restoration of the strength of the land."

This Yakima country is not just like any other part of Washington. It is a series of valleys, or, better, a series of groups of valleys. You ride along the Northern Pacific railroad through a gorge that rises precipitously from the river on one side, and which crowds the track on the other. This continues for a few miles. Then suddenly the mountains re-veal on either side and you are sliding along through a valley from five to ten miles wide. The valley, with its farms, is with you for half an hour or more, and you have time to see other smaller valleys opening into it and narrowing toward the mountains. Then before you know it, you are in another gorge with only the mile, for company. These valleys are like basins. Looking from the center of one of them, one seems to be hemmed in on every side by mountains. The gorges, by which the river enters and leaves the valley, are so tortuous they do not show in the general outline of the mountain tops.

The city of North Yakima is in one of these stretches along the Yakima river, and also at a point where seven smaller valleys converge, each with its smaller stream, into the main valley. These seven valleys are the Ahtanum, the Natchez, the Cowichee, the Wenas, the Selah, the Moxee and the Parker—a fine collection of Indian names. As this is a new country, and as there was no town here until the railroad got in four years ago, the land-seeker naturally supposed he will find "snaps" in the Yakima country. So he will, but not of the kind he is looking for. New as the country is, there is no government land left around North Yakima. The mayor of the city took the writer out behind his fast team to see the cheapest piece of farm property near the city. The forty acre lay in the center of the Ahtanum valley. As the owner of the forty was anxious to sell to get the money for another investment, he offered the forty for \$17,000—over \$400 an acre.

"That," said the mayor, "is the best bargain in farm property near the city that I know of. The man who buys it can't lose on it." All the farming land within a radius of four miles of the city is held at from \$30 to \$100 an acre. Out ten miles prices range from \$15 to \$40 an acre. The reason on this land commands such prices is because "it will raise everything," to quote the mayor. And Mr. J. K. Ward, who used to farm near Warrensburg in the richest part of Johnson county, Mo., added: "One acre here will raise double what an acre in Missouri will."

"Where is the best land in Washington to be homesteaded?" was asked of Mr. L. S. Howlett, who, for quite a period, had charge of the United States land office at North Yakima, in the very heart of the new state.

"The best land for a man to homestead, in my judgment," was the reply, "is up near the British line, in a tract as yet un-

surveyed. It is known as the Columbia, or Moses reservation, taking its name from old Moses, who was a famous Indian chief. But the settler who takes a claim there now still have to squat on it and wait for the government survey. The best land which has been surveyed and can be taken at the United States land offices without delay is in the Big Bend country, as it is called on account of the sweeping curve the Columbia makes around two sides of it. It is fifty miles south of the British line, and is across the Columbia, east from the Moses country. This Moses country consists of fertile bottom lands along the little creeks, with timber along the hills. The Big Bend country is a great table land covered with bunchgrass. It has no sage brush and does not look to irrigation for its development. It is like the Walla Walla wheat country.

"Now what will you say is the best thing for the eastern farmer who sells out and comes to Washington with a few thousand dollars, prepared to buy rather than homestead?" "That man," said Mr. Howlett, "should settle in the Palouse, Walla Walla or Yakima regions. Land can still be had at reasonable prices, say from \$5 to \$25 an acre, and it is bound to increase in value. It is the kind of land which produces thirty-five bushels of wheat to the acre. There are many old settlers who came in early and who are willing to sell out at prices which are cheap, considering the productive value. I think that for five years to come farms can be bought in the regions I have mentioned at figures below their real values. For several years I have been buying up old ranches at from \$35 to \$40 an acre, dividing them a from \$60 to \$200 an acre. That is a general indication of the way things are going."

Irrigation has made the Yakima country what it is. But thus far the use of the water has been upon a small scale compared with what is to be attempted. The present ditches lead from the mountain streams which flow into the Yakima. There are only two or three larger canals, which take the water in considerable quantities from the river itself. As the result of the contracted way of doing things, hundreds of thousands of acres of land, as good as that which "raises everything," are left outside of the present system of irrigation. But now that the experimental stage has passed water is to be handled in quantities and on levels not heretofore attempted. Within the present week surveying parties have taken the field at North Yakima to run the lines for a big canal 100 miles long. Charles J. Gregory, William J. Bryson and G. A. Young, of Chicago, Walter N. Granger, Albert Kleinschmidt and J. D. McIntyre, of Helena, and other men of means are in the company, which proposes to apply irrigation on a gigantic scale. The company will operate in two localities to begin with—the Yakima country in Washington, and between West Gallatin and Madison in Montana. The plan of business is simple. The company has purchased 1,000,000 acres of land now utterly worthless for want of water. The proposition is to build the canals to supply these lands with irrigation, and then sell the land and the water-right combined. The profit is to come from the enhanced value of the land. When it is seen what water has made of the land now under cultivation in the Yakima country the speculation seems to be safe enough. At any rate, it is well worth watching. If this company and a few others succeed, there will be no demand for the general government to go into the irrigation business. Private capital will take possession of the field.

One proof of the Yakima pudding is found in the shipment of 1,000 car loads of melons this season. Yakima melons are becoming known all over the new state. The other day Captain Gray, the veteran navigator of the Upper Columbia river, came from Pasco, his home, to Yakima on a visit. He was conducted to Mayor Reed's office, where he gazed upon a melon weighing fifty-four pounds and several other melons weighing something less. At that stage of the proceedings a big knife was produced, one of the melons was cut, and the captain was soon learning that Yakima melons taste as good as they look. As he laid down his third rind to pick up his fourth slice, Captain Gray seemed to think the occasion called for some defense of Pasco. He observed, in a matter-of-fact tone:

"The reason we don't raise melons successfully at Pasco is that the vines grow so fast that they wear the melons out dragging them over the ground. Our soil is too rich, I think, for melons." Every Yakima man in the room stopped eating and looked at the captain, but he was entirely serious.

"Your soil is too rich, is it?" retorted Mayor Reed. "Let me tell you, Captain Gray, the soil at Pasco is so poor that you can't raise an umbrella on two acres of it. Why, sir, if I am correctly informed, your soil is so poor that it takes two pee-dee birds to make one holler—one to holler 'pee' and the other to holler 'dee.' I am told that a child three feet high can stand in a hole two feet deep and pick the top blossoms off the peach trees at Pasco." The captain was silenced. The man who talks last usually has the best of it in these sharp comparisons of Washington towns. Over at Tacoma the other day some real estate men were telling visitors of the marvelous growth of their city. Private Cosgrove, grand commander of the G. A. R. of the department of Washington, was one of the listeners. When the Tacoma men had about exhausted themselves, Cosgrove took an inning.

"My town of Pomeroy, in Eastern Washington," said he, "has had the most wonderful growth of any place I've yet seen. Why, gentlemen, Pomeroy grew so fast at one time that it actually overtook the coyotes before they could get out on the prairie, and they had their young in the cellars."

One of this country's resources and development. That was the settler who was trying to impress on some newcomers an idea of the abundance of game in Washington. He told about reaching home after dark one frosty evening and finding the wood box empty and the fire low. Without stopping to take off his coat he rushed outdoors to the woodpile, grabbed up what he thought was an armful of sticks and hurried back into the house.

"Blame me, gentlemen," said he, "if when I got to the light every one of those sticks of wood didn't turn out to be a jack-rabbit."

A rather good one at the expense of Seattle and Tacoma, the rival cities of Western Washington is told on the Sound boats. It seems that a Southern California man cleaned up what he could from the remains of the boom down there and came up to Washington this summer to invest. He visited Tacoma and the real estate men there promptly took him in hand and showed him business in town lots north of the city. He said he thought he location was some distance from the center of the city, but they assured him Tacoma was bound to reach it inside of twelve months. So the Southern California man said he'd think about it and let the agents know in a day or two.

In the meantime he took a boat and slipped over to Seattle, only two hours distant. Seattle agents immediately said they had just the property he was looking for. They put him into a buggy, drove out south of Seattle and showed him the very spot of ground he had been offered as Tacoma suburban property. As soon as the investor had partially recovered from his astonishment, he said: "Gentlemen, I came up here to place my money as near as possible to the center of some city, but I'll be damned if you can get me to invest in the center between two cities."

A nephew of Gardner Hubbard, of Washington, D. C., came out to North Yakima and settled on a ranch of 100 acres. That was the beginning of the Moxee model farm, which is one of the famous institutions of the new state. Mr. Hubbard is the father-in-law of Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone. He was wealthy to begin with and the telephone profits made him more so. He became interested in his nephew's venture, invested more and more money, until now the Moxee farm, with 1,000 acres under cultivation and twice as much not yet improved, with its fine stock, with its herd on the range, and with its complete buildings represents an investment of \$50,000 of Bell telephone profits. Mr. Hubbard and his associates have not yet made any money out of the farm, but they have done a great thing for Washington. Their investment has been in the nature of a series of experiments which have demonstrated how to handle the soil. The present manager of the Moxee is William Ker, a stalwart Scotchman. He came here from Chicago where he conducted the Bell telephone business. Under his management the farm is likely to show some returns for the money spent, unless the experimenting goes on.

The Moxee crop of alfalfa this year is 800 tons. It represents five cuttings, and is worth \$12 a ton in North Yakima today. From 145 acres was harvested a crop of barley which gave forty-six bushels to the acre. Washington alfalfa and Montana barley commands a higher price than any other in the Milwaukee market. It corresponds to the No. 1 hard wheat of the Dakotas. It is so much harder than barley raised in other states that maltsters have to give it two days longer in the course of preparation for malt. This advantage in price is more than the extra cost for transportation.

A \$200 Shire stallion is at the head of the Moxee stables, and a thoroughbred Chester white boar, the gift of President Oakes, of the Northern Pacific, is the monarch of the pens. On the mountain sides and table lands beyond the valley, range 200 head of cattle bearing the Moxee brand. The Indians are now at work in the Moxee hop yard picking the crop. But this is not all of the diversified product of the model farm. The third successful crop of tobacco has just been gathered, a factory has been erected and cigars are being manufactured on the farm at a profit of 50 to the acre, as Mr. Ker calculates results from what has so far been accomplished.

Nothing is attempted without irrigation. And here comes in the most interesting feature of the experiment. A ditch which taps the Yakima river some miles above brings the water in a fine stream to the Moxee. There are two systems of irrigation. One consists in plowing frequent furrows or laterals from the ditch, and letting the water into them. The other plan is flooding the whole surface of the field. The ditches are built above the level of the ground a few inches. The fields are divided into sections or "checks" by small embankments with gates. These checks vary in size according to the grade. Where the ground is almost a dead level they may be made to contain twenty or thirty acres. Where there is quite a grade they may have to be reduced to an acre in size to prevent the soil from washing away. The water is turned from the elevated ditch into one of these checks until it stands from one to three inches deep all over the surface. The length of time it is allowed to stand varies according to the crop and the ideas of the manager. The gates in the little ditches or embankments give perfect control. The water can be drained from one check to another, and distributed at will.

for their accommodation and that of the neighborhood. Adjoining the model farm a Boston man named Scudder has established himself on a dairy farm of 1,000 acres, and is making butter in large quantities, with the very latest improvements in machinery for that purpose. He raises corn and alfalfa and other forage crops, and preserves them in great silos. Looking upon the big barns and fine horses of the Moxee valley one has difficulty in realizing that this is a new country. Pioneering in Central Washington need inspire no terrors. W. B. S.

A Woman's Discovery.

"Another wonderful discovery has been made and that too by a lady in this county. Disease fastened its clutches upon her and for seven years she withstood its severest tests, but her vital organs were undermined and death seemed imminent. For three months she coughed incessantly and could not sleep. She bought of us a bottle of Dr. King's New Discovery for consumption and was so much relieved on taking first dose that she slept all night and with one bottle had been miraculously cured. Her name is Mrs. Luther Lutz." Thus writes W. C. Hamrick & Co., of Shelby, N. C. Get a trial bottle free at L. V. Janack's drug store.

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"Another marked effect of the use of this medicine was the strengthening of my sight."—Mrs. Carrie Adams, Holly Springs, Texas. "I had a dry, waxy humor for years, and suffered terribly; and, as my brother and sister were similarly afflicted, I presume the malady is hereditary. Last winter, Dr. Lyman (of Ferrisburgh, N. Y.) recommended me to take Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and continue it for a year. For five months I took it daily. I have not had a headache upon my body for the last three months."—T. E. Wiley, 146 Chambers st., New York City.

"Last fall and winter I was troubled with a dull, heavy pain in my side. It did not notice it much at first, but it gradually grew worse until it became almost unbearable. During the latter part of this time, disorders of the stomach and liver increased my troubles. I began taking Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and after faithfully continuing the use of this medicine for some months, the pain disappeared, and I was completely cured."—Mrs. Augusta A. Furbush, Haverhill, Mass.

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