

village on the Marne or the Meuse, and the illusion is heightened as you approach, by the sign "Hotel de France" on a cream-colored building half hidden by shade. It vanishes, however, when you get over the ferry on the dusty business street, bordered by mean little one-story wooden buildings. Yet the place is one of the most attractive of all the frontier towns, from the abundance of foliage and the pretty door-yards, with their lush turf, and their shrubbery and flowers,—rare adornments in this raw, utilitarian West. The heights one descends to reach the town from the country north of the Clearwater and the Snake, viewed from the valley, are bold, bare mountains of basaltic rock scantily covered with dry herbage. Their creased and bulging slopes, strangely colored in all shades of brown, have a fantastic appearance, and when their singular hues are brightened by sunset tints they look like the paint-and-canvas creation of the brain of some opium-eating artists rather than like real mountains of nature's own make.

Lewiston lies in Idaho, just across the line, and here the North Idaho question is sure to be put before the visitor. The mountain range, which at the end of the shank of the leg-of-mutton shaped territory divides it from Washington, bears off to the east, and leaves three good agricultural counties along its base. These counties have no relations with the other settled regions of Idaho except an enforced political one; and they demand separation and annexation to Washington, with which they are identical in their business interests and the character of their country. A range of mountains eighty miles across, and passable only by an Indian trail, divides them from South Idaho, and they are forced to make a détour of six hundred miles through Washington and Oregon to reach the territorial capital at Boise City. All their lines of communication with the rest of the world lead by river and road across an artificial boundary traced on a map by a meridian line to the towns of Washington and Oregon. Their reasonable request is, that when Washington is admitted as a State they be joined to it. The only opposition to this plan comes from the politicians of South Idaho, who do not want to lose the taxes on the seven thousand prosperous people inhabiting the northern counties. Besides Lewiston, with its twelve hundred inhabitants, there lie in this region, Moscow with nearly a thousand, and half a dozen little budding towns living on trade with the grain farmers and stock-raisers. The eastward indentation in the mountain chain is thirty miles deep, and is drained by the Clearwater and its tributaries. The richest portion of it is called the Potlatch country.

Right across it lies the Nez-Percé Reservation, which the Lewiston people are eager to have broken up. Wherever there is an Indian reservation the white settlers near by want it abolished. They look upon the Indian as a cumbrer of the ground, and would order him to move on if they could. The Nez-Percés are tolerably well advanced in civilization. One of them has sold eight thousand dollars' worth of horses and cattle this year. There are seventy houses on the reservation, but the occupants pitch their lodges close by, and would doubtless relapse into a nomadic life if the Government did not constantly encourage them to till the soil and look after their stock. These Nez-Percés look like harmless people. One of them dined near me at the hotel in Lewiston, and his manner of feeding was, if anything, a trifle less greedy than that of some of the white guests. It was the cousins of these same tamed barbarians, however, who, under Chief Joseph, refused to go on the reservation, cut the throats of the wives and children of the settlers on the Cottonwood, and massacred Lieutenant Raines and his thirteen soldiers. The Nez-Percé war was the tragedy of North Idaho, and the people are never weary of reciting this epic of the frontier, with its scenes of heroism and horror. It would be folly for the Government to bring back Joseph and his exiled band to the reservation. Their lives would not be safe from the wrath of the relatives and neighbors of the murdered settlers.

South and west of Lewiston the good arable country sweeps around by the base of the Blue Mountains to Walla-Walla, a distance of ninety miles. The whole fertile belt of East Washington, I have said before, may roughly be measured as two hundred and fifty miles long by fifty broad. It is all fertile, and amazingly fertile too. There is absolutely no waste land in it, save on the steep slopes of the Snake River Cañon. It is sparsely settled as yet, but immigrants are steadily streaming in, and it will soon contain a dense agricultural population. It is a better grain country than even Eastern Dakota, the average yield being considerably larger. Besides this magnificent farming belt, all parts of which are alike in their general characteristics of elevation, hilly surface, and uniformly productive soil, East Washington contains two other fertile regions: the Big Bend country, lying in the sweep of the Columbia—an extensive plain just beginning to attract settlers—and the Yakima country, a series of narrow valleys on the eastern slope of the Cascade Mountains. I have not visited either of them. Both are said to be good stock and wheat sections.