

to the acre is an average crop. All the fields are set with a new leafless forest of poles, and I heard of one man last year who cleared \$50,000 off a farm of no very large area.

That was a good season; but there have been bad ones. Then the farmers had nothing to fall back upon, for they plant nothing else whatever, and are scarcely more than speculators in hops. They might raise an abundance of fruit, but few orchards have been planted; cows could find rich pasturage, but the people buy milk in Tacoma, and bring butter from Oregon. When the full year comes, and they make a large profit, they spend most of it in having a luxurious time, and very little in improvements. This shiftless procedure uses up in one poor year all the gain of a good one; and if two bad seasons occur, money must be borrowed at from fifteen to twenty-five per cent. interest. Thus a large portion of this rich valley is overlaid by heavy mortgages, and its development will be slow until a wiser and more enterprising generation arises.

The picking, in September, is done wholly by Indians, who gather with their families from the region around, excelling every other nationality in this work. Merry times are seen then. Most numerous, of course, are the Puyallups, whose reservation is at the mouth of the river. These Indians live in cabins and frame houses for the most part, and the majority of them cultivate land to pretty good advantage, though they never work as hard for themselves as when they hire out to white farmers.

Southward and westward of Tacoma stretch the copse-dotted plains of Steilacoom, ruddy with sorrel, over which you may drive your carriage miles and miles in any direction as upon a natural road. On the further side is the fine old post of Fort Steilacoom, now abandoned and given to the Territory for an insane asylum. It was army head-quarters in this region during the Indian wars of 1855-8, of which the block-houses, encountered here and there, are also reminders. On their western border is Olympia, the old Puget Sound port, and now the capital of the Territory—a pretty, maple-shaded village, with many very pleasant people, who have more leisure to enjoy life than occurs elsewhere. Olympia has almost nothing to live upon beyond the crumbs that fall from the government tables, except the

custom she derives from the Chehalis Valley, which lies west of her, since the more adjacent district is heavily forested, and its sandy soil is of small worth while so much superior land is available.

The Chehalis rises in the Olympic Mountains, and, flowing southward and westward, empties into Gray's Harbor. Those who have seen it grow enthusiastic over the timber that clothes its upper drainage, and the arable fields lying along its lower course. A considerable population is gathered there now, growing wheat and oats and planting fruit trees. These settlements trade at Olympia; but already a railway is projected to come up from Astoria, and there is talk of another to enter from the westward, with a line of steamers from Gray's Harbor to San Francisco, while a third line is intended to tap the upper valley on its way northward. I should like to know a piece of Washington valley land ten miles square that has not had a railway surveyed over it; and all the lines seem in a fair way to be built.

The anticipations of all the sound towns depend upon the fixture of that mysterious, speculator-plaguing will-o'-the-wisp "the terminus" of the Northern Pacific Railroad. New Tacoma has it now, and purposes to keep it, claiming that her distance from the sea matters no more than in the case of Baltimore or New Orleans. Seattle agrees that distance is nothing, since the waters are thoroughly navigable, but says she is nearest the centre of resources, and has greater wharf facilities. The lower sound towns, Port Townsend, Port Discovery, and Port Angeles, urge their contiguity to the ocean, offer their fine harbors, and say that by rail they are only about thirty miles farther from Portland than Seattle, while twice that distance of slow and expensive towage is saved. It is understood that measures have already been taken to construct a railway from Port Townsend along the west shore of Hood's Canal to Skookumchuck or Tenino, on the Northern Pacific. This project may not in the rapidity of its progress meet the expectations now entertained; but before long I think a railway will be extended along that route, and I can not but believe that the harbor of Port Townsend will ultimately become the actual if not the nominal terminus, which is now a matter of universal forethought.