

one store, and one hotel. A New York gentleman got out of the stage-coach and entering one of the saloons, asked politely for a little sherry in a wine-glass. The bar-keeper glared at him for a moment, then reached for a six-shooter and pointing it at the terrified traveler shouted, "Now, I tell you, tenderfoot, you take whisky. You take it in a tin-cup and you like it." The stranger took the whisky in the tin-cup, asserted that it was the best he ever drank, and made haste to get back to the coach.

The valleys of the three rivers which form the Missouri, the Gallatin, the Madison, and the Jefferson, seen from the hill east of Bozeman form the best developed agricultural region of Montana, and I think the only section of the Territory where broad areas of land can be seen under cultivation. Elsewhere the farms are narrow strips skirting the banks of streams. Not that the good land all lies in belts close to the creeks and rivers, but thus far farming has only been attempted where water could be brought upon the fields without much labor or expense. The time will soon come when a system of scientific irrigation requiring considerable capital for constructing long main ditches will be introduced, as has already been done in Colorado. Hundreds of thousands of fertile acres lie idle which can easily be reclaimed and made to produce large crops by utilizing the water now running to waste. Montana agriculture thus far is rudimentary and superficial. Men took to it as a business, because the isolation of the Territory and the demands of the mining camps for food and forage opened home markets at exceedingly high prices. When land could be had for the taking, and by a cheap and simple method of irrigation be made to produce sixty bushels of oats, fifty of wheat or three hundred of potatoes to the acre, farming was more profitable than gold mining. The old ranchmen would like to see this state of things continue. They are angry at the railroads pushing into the Territory from east, west, and south, foreseeing that the old era of high prices, free and easy living, vigilance committees and revolver law is doomed, and that they must soon conform to the general conditions of life prevailing in the densely settled portions of the country. One of the results of the construction of railroads through Montana will be to increase the price of land and diminish the value of crops,—a seeming paradox explained by the fact that hitherto no reasonable ratio has existed between the two. A man's farm has hardly been salable for the amount realized from its annual product. For example, a young man, owning one of the best ranches in the Galla-

tin valley, recently married in the East; and as his wife did not like Montana—no woman does until she has lived a long time in the Territory—he sold his ranch for \$2500. A few days after he signed the deed, one of the Bozeman merchants paid him \$3500 for the crop of oats he had just harvested.

Farming by irrigation is more laborious and expensive than the ordinary method, but it yields much larger returns. A Montana farmer would think he had unusually bad luck if a field of fifty acres did not average sixty bushels of oats to the acre year after year. The water brought upon the land is believed to have fertilizing properties, although it is usually as clear as spring water. A field farmed by irrigation must be so situated that water can be brought along one side of it in a main ditch, and must have sufficient slope for cross ditches to be run with a plow from twelve to twenty feet apart. If the season is very dry, water must be brought upon the whole field three times; in an ordinary season once or twice is often enough. The ground must be thoroughly moistened plowshare deep. The farmer goes along the ditches with a spade, making little dams to spread the water, and thus patch by patch he gets the whole surface drenched at last.

From Bozeman to Helena is about one hundred miles, and the sparsely settled condition of Montana will be understood when I say, that in the region settled seventeen years ago, with the exception of one little mining village of perhaps two hundred inhabitants, nothing which can possibly be called a town is seen in the whole journey. A little belt of farming settlement follows the banks of the Missouri for twenty miles below the junction of the three rivers, and a few creeks coming down from the mountain sides are dotted with ranches. The lines of black alders fringing these creeks can be seen ten miles away,—narrow, bright-green ribbons laid across the gray, bunch-grass slopes from the gorges in the foot-hills down to the deep valley of the river. There are striking views of the Belt Mountains on the east and the main range of the Rockies on the west to be had from the high divides between the creeks, and at one point the Missouri can be seen for many miles,—a clear, winding stream embracing countless little green islands. The country is covered with a sparse growth of bunch-grass growing in stands of about a dozen stacks with bare spaces as large as a dinner-plate between. The grass gives color to the valleys, slopes, and hills; but nowhere is it thick enough to look like an eastern pasture. Herds of horses and cattle are seen here and there. They look fat and contented, but to