

Written for this Paper  
RE-ARRANGING THE WEST.

THE proposition to make a repartition of that part of the United States west of the Missouri river, recently advocated in the *Irrigation Age* by Orren M. Donaldson, is attracting considerable attention in the East, where by many it is considered to be possible. Our attention has been again called to it by Mr. George Arbogast, of this city, with a request that we give some of the details of the proposition.

In the East the scheme is regarded as being put forward by the irrigating experts of the West, though so far as Utah is concerned it has received little consideration. The plan, if adopted, would be fraught with amazing political and economical possibilities, and while there are few now who believe the proposed repartition ever will be made, yet its advocates say that such a repartition as they propose is essential to the growth and development of the greater part of the West, and that it must come some day. The design is given in the accompanying map, the present arrangement being shown by the light lines and the proposed partition by the heavy lines, with the names of the new and the old states inserted.

The wonderful development of the

have been transformed into fruit orchards and fertile farming lands. On irrigation the future of the greater part of the West depends and with a full and proper use of the resources of the country there is now scarcely a section of the almost uninhabited Western desert regions that may not be rendered able to support as large a population as the best agricultural lands of the East.

The article referred to claims so far the reclamation of the desert has been carried on without any particular system. Private corporations have bought up what seemed favorable sections of country, tapping rivers here and there at haphazard, and wasting more water than they used. Whole water areas have been pre-empted for the use of small sections, without protest, because there were no neighbors to demand a share. But as the value of the land under irrigation became apparent, other settlers came along, and their natural and rightful share of the necessary water supply being cut off for the greater benefit of others, trouble arose. This kind of thing has grown, and the dissatisfaction has been intensified with the growth, until many western states are the scene of bitter contests over water rights. The adjustment of these difficulties is one of the objects sought in the proposed re-parti-

many millions of acres of the best irrigable land in one state depend for their natural water supply on rivers that rise and run the greater part of their length in another state. The people in the latter state can cut off the water supply and use or waste it all in their own state, ruining the land in the lower state. It has already happened that large areas of land made valuable by irrigation secured through the erection of costly works have been ruined through the later development of agriculture on lands in another state higher up the rivers. Thus serious conflicts have arisen between States, and some such questions are now before Congress and the Department of the Interior. Kansas wants to know if her agriculture is to be destroyed in favor of Colorado's settlers, and in turn the Colorado people want to know if they must abandon their lands and industries in favor of the Kansas farmers. Idaho and Utah, Utah, Nevada, and California are wrangling over like questions. And as agriculture is developed similar questions in numberless varying details will arise among all the States of the West.

These troubles are caused by the manner in which the states were laid out. A glance at the map of the United States will show the notable difference between boundaries in the eastern and western halves. In the eastern half natural boundaries, rivers, mountains, and the like, are largely followed. In the western the state divisions are almost wholly on the lines of latitude and longitude. There is total disregard of geographical lines, and the results in some cases, as developed along with the development of the country, are comical as well as complex. In Arizona, for instance, people living north of the Grand canyon can get to their capital only by traveling several hundred miles out of the direct way, and passing through other states. The canyon is impassable for five hundred miles of its length except in one place. Montana, Colorado and Wyoming are cut in halves by the Rocky Mountains, while Washington and Oregon are divided by the Cascade Range, and the districts on either side these mountains have few interests in common, while many of their interests conflict.

What the proposers of the new scheme want is, that the states shall be mapped out with regard to topographical affinity, and their territory shall be based on undivided water systems or drainage basins. When the reclamation of the arid West is fully taken in hand, they say, the irrigation works will have to be constructed and controlled by the states. But whether operated by the state or by private companies it will be impossible to accomplish what will be required unless the whole of every separate irrigation district, the whole of the lands and waters, is under one set of laws and one state authority. As bounded now, there is not a river of considerable size in all the irrigation country that does not flow through two or more states or territories. The water systems of the whole arid region are crossed and re-crossed by state lines. Columns would be needed to tell the curious way in which the meandering of rivers through three or four states or territories has raised all manner of intricate questions of water rights and involved the whole West in inter-state problems. The Bear



arid West, which practically includes most of the country between the Missouri river and the Sierras, by irrigation, is admitted in the East to be one of the marvels of this age. Within the last few years the most hopeless looking deserts of sand and sage brush in Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Southern California and other Western States

tion. But the greater reason urged is that the question of irrigation must be taken up in the interests of the people as a whole. The water supply, from every source, must be so used as to benefit the most people. The irrigation experts say this end cannot possibly be attained as the Western States are at present constituted. The trouble is that