

## BOISÉ CITY AND VALLEY.

THE seat of the Territorial government of Idaho is Boise City, the county seat of Ada County and leading commercial centre of the Territory. In the year 1835 the Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Boisé as a fur trading post, in opposition to Fort Hall, which had been founded near Snake River the year before by Nathaniel J. Wyeth, as representative of a Boston trading company. This post was located at the mouth of Boisé River, from which it derived its name. In the language of the French half-breeds, who composed the majority of the company's servants, Boisé means "woody," and the name was applied to the stream because, in comparison with others of that region, it had an unusual growth of timber along its banks. Fremont remarked this when eight years later he wrote in his journal: "Such a stream had become quite a novelty in this country, and we were delighted this afternoon to make a pleasant camp under fine old trees again." Fort Boisé continued a post of the great fur company for many years, and was an important point on the line of overland emigration to Oregon in the early days. It was abandoned by the company when compelled to withdraw from United States territory.

Following the rush of miners into Idaho in 1860-1-2, it was decided to establish a military post in that region, and in 1863 the present Fort Boisé (now officially designated as "Boisé Barracks") was founded, fifty miles above the site of the old fort. As a natural consequence a town began to grow up about the fort, a town-site company was organized, and the new candidate for commercial honors was christened "Boisé City" in honor of the fort and river. Though there was little in the barren town-site at that time to suggest such a title as an original one, a stranger who now sees it buried beneath a mass of most magnificent shade trees could suggest no appellation more appropriate than that of "the wooded city" which it bears. The excitement attending the discovery of gold in Boisé Basin brought thousands of miners to this part of Idaho, and Boisé City became at once a most important place. Following this came its selection as the capital of the newly-created Territory, since which time it has grown steadily in wealth and importance.

Boisé City stands on the north side of the river, some fifty miles above its confluence with the Snake, and in a commanding position both as regards the large and fertile valley in which it is situated and the rich mineral region in the mountains beyond. Here, far from the main lines of travel (until 1883, 250 miles from the nearest railroad communication), accessible from the great world outside only by long and tedious journeys by stage or teams for days and nights, over forbidding, desolate and uninhabited stretches of sage brush desert and alkali plains, in what was so long considered as a far-off corner of the country, the pioneers and settlers of Idaho have built their little city, founded their homes, and established their places of trade and business.

By the census of 1880 the population was fixed at

1,899, but the vote of the last general election indicates a present population of fully 3,000. This growth is the natural result of the opening of this region by the Oregon Short Line. It is not the work of systematic "booming," but the natural growth of a commercial centre following closely after the development of the country. Such being the case, a still greater growth may be looked for during the next five years, since Southern Idaho must develop even faster than during the last half decade. But two years have elapsed since that region was first penetrated by railroads, and the tide of immigration has but just begun to set in toward that comparatively unknown country. The number of immigrants is largely increasing annually, and will continue to increase as the resources, both agricultural and mineral, became better known. The natural result will be enhanced wealth, population and business for Boisé City, which already has an assessment roll aggregating \$1,000,000.

The business part of the town is substantially built of brick and stone, a city ordinance prohibiting the erection of frame or wooden buildings within certain limits. The streets are wide, clean and shady, crossing each other at right angles, the blocks intersected lengthwise by convenient alleyways. There are many handsome two and three story frame and brick dwellings that would reflect credit upon a much older and larger town. The town was incorporated January 11, 1866, and as the citizens have always taken special pains to elect responsible business men for its officials, the government has in general been wisely administered. There is a regularly organized fire department, with a Silsby steamer, three hose carts, hook and ladder apparatus and 1,500 feet of hose. There are two companies—Boisé Engine, No. 1, and Ada Hook and Ladder, No. 1. The city has recently erected a neat two-story brick engine house at a cost of \$3,000. Mountain water is introduced into town through a complete system of water works.

There are three excellent hotels—the Overland, Central and Western. There are about a dozen general merchandise stores, besides a number of dealers in special merchandise, such as stationery, drugs, jewelry, furniture, etc. The aggregate amount of business done by the merchants monthly is about \$200,000 cash sales. All professions and mechanical trades are well represented. Besides the branches of industry common to a town of this sort, there are several flour, grist, planing and lumber mills, two breweries, a distillery and brick and marble works. The First National Bank has an authorized capital of \$500,000; present capital, \$100,000. A telephone exchange has been established between the leading business houses, hotels and public buildings. A Board of Trade has recently been organized, which has rendered valuable service to the business interests of the city. There are three papers—*Statesman* (tri-weekly), *Democrat* (semi-weekly) and *Republican* (weekly).

The public buildings located in the city are numerous and some of them imposing and ornamental structures. In the past the United States Assay Office has absorbed all the honors. It is a substantial stone edifice, sixty