

THE CAPITAL OF WASHINGTON.



ONE of the oldest established towns in Washington Territory was located at the very head of Puget sound, at the head of that small arm of the sound known as Budd's inlet, and named Olympia. The DesChutes river, flowing from the southeast, discharges its waters at that point, and on the east bank of that stream and the inlet where they join the city of Olympia was platted. The earliest settlement was made at Tumwater, a town adjoining Olympia on the south, but the people seemed to prefer the location on the inlet, so Olympia came into existence and grew beyond its companion town. In 1851 the plat of the city was surveyed, and two years later, when Washington Territory was detached from Oregon and a government organized, Olympia was selected as its capital city. This brought the place into public notice and it enjoyed a fair period of growth, so that for a number of years it was the chief city of the territory then popularly supposed to be a vast extent of wilderness and waste, each as forbidding as the other and neither considered very inviting save by the few pioneers who were acquainted with them. In 1859 Olympia was duly incorporated a city and since then it has had a steady and substantial growth. At the present time it has a population of between four thousand and five thousand souls, and it appears to be on the eve of a very promising growth; indeed, just now Olympia is commanding more attention than any other town of similar characteristics in the west. At first view Olympia impresses one with an indefinable charm that is quite irresistible. Approaching it by boat the whole town comes into view at once, located on a hillside that slopes down to the water's edge. The city stands out to advantage in the setting of dense green, which the heavily-timbered shores of Budd's inlet furnish. The long bridge extending across to the western shore, the mills and wharves and business blocks, the residences farther back on the hill, the wide and well-kept streets, all impress the stranger favorably, and are the strongest persuasion that could be employed to induce visitors to examine the city and to locate there. West of the center there is a depression in the surface, and then, what is known as the east side lies on the gentle slope facing the water and the higher part of the town.

Probably the motive that induced the settlement

at that point at so early a date was to get as near the resources of the interior as possible and still have deep water communication. The only transportation facilities in the Pacific northwest at that period were what the water furnished, or by pack trail overland, and the former was universally preferred to the latter. The Tumwater falls also furnished an abundance of water power, which it was naturally calculated would be turned to account in manufacturing the raw products which the country afforded. This admirable power and the location at the head of deep water navigation in the very heart of so rich a country as Western Washington, could scarcely have been better designed for the growth of a city of importance. It is surrounded by all the natural advantages that could be desired. Probably the fact that it is not the commercial metropolis to day can be attributed to the change of the base of operations which occurred when the northwest was invaded by railroads and the region had to face about and do business from another standpoint than that originally designed. This change made necessary a readjustment, in which the railroad towns, of course, had a temporary advantage. Olympia was unfortunate in not being on any great railroad line, while some resources upon which it depended for its growth were tapped from the interior and led away in the opposite direction. To regain control of the situation and command its just share of patronage of the region has been rather slow work, but it has been so fully accomplished that the city's prospects for rapid advancement were never so good as at the present time. The confidence which is established in all branches of business is contagious and is drawing capital and people from abroad to locate there. The real estate market is very active and the eagerness with which the various additions are bought by people anxious to erect homes promises a rapid extension of the city's area and an inevitable increase of its population and commercial importance. It may be said that there is not a vacant residence in the city and some buildings are occupied before the doors or windows are put in. Business enterprises are projected fully in keeping with the increasing population of the city, and their consummation will bring Olympia prominently to the front.

The manufacturing institutions of Olympia now in operation include three saw mills, a planing mill, a wooden water pipe factory, a brewery and many smaller concerns, such as blacksmiths', gunsmiths', harness makers', tinsmiths' and milliners' shops, carpenters' and builders' and fish curing establishments, etc., that furnish employment to many hands. The only thin-shelled wooden pipes for underground water conduits that are manufactured in the United States are those turned out of the Olympia factory.