

PICTURESQUE SALEM.

SALEM, the capital of Oregon, does not owe its prominence merely to the fact that it is the seat of government of a rich and prosperous commonwealth. It is one of the oldest cities in the northwest. It has always been in a healthy condition and has maintained a steady growth from the beginning, but the strides now being made are bringing the capital city to the front rank in all respects. The progress that has been made in the past year or so seems quite remarkable. By the school census taken in the spring of this year it was found, by actual count, that the Salem school district had ten thousand three hundred inhabitants, which was a gain of twenty-five per cent. over the corresponding enumeration of the previous year. That is a very rapid increase and it indicates in no uncertain way that the city is forging ahead at a lively pace. The school district comprises only what is, practically, a part of the city, and it is entirely within bounds to place the present population of the city of Salem at eleven thousand souls. The same rate of growth that obtained last year is still in progress, and it is likely that the current twelve months will show even a greater degree of improvement than it ever experienced before in a similar period. All indications point in that direction.

Undoubtedly to people far away in the east who have no acquaintance with the individual characteristics of many of the western cities, the fact that Salem is the capital of Oregon is the one thing associated with it; but to those who are not familiar with the northwest and its rapid development this does not mean much. This accounts for the genuine surprise tourists experience in noting what, to western people, are among the commonest things. The traveler, who, before taking a western tour, consults reference books to become, in a measure, conversant with the country, finds Salem set down as a town of five or six thousand population and the capital of the most western state of the republic. When he finds a city of twice that size, with important commercial and industrial interests, besides being the governmental headquarters for a commonwealth whose richness they had scarcely before dreamed of, it is no wonder he should be surprised, and, withal, delighted. But it is not so much the extensive business interests of the city as its unusual picturesqueness that impresses the visitor most favorably. In this respect Salem occupies an enviable position.

In the matter of public buildings, Salem certainly surpasses any other city in the northwest. The most prominent of these are the state capitol, state asylum for the insane, state penitentiary, deaf mute school

and school for the education of the blind, the Willamette university, Marion county court house, public and private school buildings and the various churches and municipal buildings. The Indian training school at Chemawa, a suburb of Salem, is practically one of the capital city's institutions. These edifices are well constructed and of imposing styles of architecture and are in the midst of pleasant surroundings. The park about the capitol, known as Wilson avenue, occupies three blocks, three hundred by three hundred and twenty feet each, laid out in pleasing designs and planted with shade trees, many of which have attained a large size. This park is in the center of the city and is one of its most attractive features. Marion square, in the west-central part of town, not far from the Willamette river, which flows past the city on the west, is a very pretty little park filled with large, spreading trees that give it the appearance of a dense forest. This is near the business center and is much patronized. A cool breeze always freely circulates through the park and to the ordinary denizens of hot and dusty cities it seems the most balmy, restful spot imaginable. The citizens take much pride in keeping this park in good order so its benefits may be enjoyed by all who choose to seek it. Highland park addition is the name of a large tract in the northern portion of the city, which is platted in lots and is becoming a popular locality for residences. A fir grove in the northern part of this tract was recently cleared of underbrush and other obstructions, a great deal of rustic weaving done about the various nooks and corners, an artesian well bored and driveways constructed so as to make it a pleasant place for a drive or a stroll during the most of the year. The trees of this park, having grown up in a wild forest, partake of their native characteristics and do not present the garden-cultured appearance so common in city parks. Yew park on the opposite side of the city, takes its name from the large number of yew trees growing there. It comprises a considerable tract of land in a fine location and a portion of the area is platted. A great deal of care has been taken in the plans of this park and its surroundings, so that it makes an interesting and pleasant place. The park contains several varieties of hard and soft wood. A fine stream of water flows from a spring in one corner of the grounds. The location is near the railway station, and the street car line passes through it. The city is fortunate in having these suburban tracts fall into the hands of business men who are alive to the future needs of the rapidly expanding town, and who have a sense of the esthetic as well as of the practical, and make a happy combination of the two when the property is put on the market. Nothing adds more to the desirability of