

CHENEY AND VICINITY.

Less than a dozen years ago there was nothing to indicate the building of a town where Cheney, Washington, now stands. The country was very sparsely settled. There were no railroads and not much demand for a trading center. The approach of the Northern Pacific led to the laying out of a town on the divide between the Big Bend and the Palouse countries early in 1881 and it was called Cheney, in honor of Hon. Benjamin P. Cheney, of Boston, who was then in the Northern Pacific directorate. The new town was made the seat of justice of Spokane county and for two or three years it enjoyed a rapid growth. The railway company erected the finest passenger and freight stations on the Idaho division of that line—indeed, the finest in the state—to accommodate the large volume of business that developed at Cheney. There was more business done at Cheney six years ago than at any other station on the road between Helena and Portland. Spokane Falls began its growth and the county seat was removed from Cheney to that point. Then Cheney retrograded for a time, but as settlers continued to come into the country and improve the land the industrial and commercial equilibrium was restored and the town again progressed. During the past year it has been unfortunate in the matter of losses by fire, more than \$75,000 worth of property having been consumed within that period. This is a heavy loss in a small city and it tests its recuperative power. But the people of Cheney are undaunted and are courageously repairing the damage. The city was never on a better footing for progress than it is to-day. Its speculative life may be said to have ended when the county seat was removed. Since then the region has become vastly richer, railways have been built through it, and the farms and stock ranches yield a support that will warrant preparations for a steady and substantial growth.

Cheney does not claim to be a mining town, nor a lumbering town, nor a fishing town. But it does claim to be in the center of one of the richest agricultural sections of the west. It is on the main line of the Northern Pacific railroad where the Central Washington, leading from the heart of the Big Bend country, joins it. It is sixteen miles southwest of Spokane Falls, and in a country differing greatly from that immediately surrounding the inland metropolis. A rather imperfectly defined coulee, down which the railroad passes, is moderately timbered with a belt of pine about seven miles wide. On the western edge of this strip, on a gentle slope to the east, is Cheney. To the west lie the rolling hills of the Big Bend. Eastward beyond the timber is the famous Palouse country. Prosperous farmers are tilling the soil on every side of the town. Still there are large areas not at all improved. The wild land bears a heavy growth of bunch grass on which cattle feed the whole year.

If farmers and dairymen looking for locations in the west would go to Cheney and examine the surrounding country, instead of flocking to the booming cities or to the timber region, they would be better suited with the country and would aid materially in the development of those interests that give real stability. The land is rolling, the soil rich, strong and easily tilled. There is plenty of timber at hand for use on the farm and for fuel. A good quality of water is obtained in ordinary wells. The land drains itself, and the natural moisture is sufficient for all crops. Considerable of the acreage within a few miles of Cheney is as yet unimproved, though there is no government land in that vicinity. The prices of real estate, both in town and in the country, are more reasonable than are usually found in localities having the advantages which this section presents.

Cheney is the site of a state normal school that is expected to be opened for the reception of students the coming fall. The town has a good public school and four churches. An electric light plant is being arranged for, and water works are also being put in, the supply coming from a small lake a short distance to the northward of the town. These enterprises show that the people have faith in the city. An elevator, with a capacity of 40,000 bushels, and a large flouring mill handle the grain that is marketed at Cheney. A creamery has been erected and put in operation this season, and its success is assured. The town has one bank and two weekly newspapers. There is a very attractive opening for a good hotel at Cheney. The hotel accommodations of the town are limited now, owing to the work of the unfortunate fires that have occurred there. Unless some practical hotel man soon seizes the opportunity the citizens will erect a hotel. Steps have already been taken in that direction.

Cheney has a population exceeding 1,500. It is 2,300 feet above the sea and in a climate that is as healthful as any that can be found. Its healthfulness is so marked that it is attracting many people who are in search of healthful and pleasant residences. It will doubtless become a suburban home for many people doing business in Spokane Falls. The distance is not too great to traverse night and morning when the traffic will warrant the running of suitable trains. The homes of Cheney are neat and comfortable, and great pains are taken to keep their surroundings cheerful and beautiful. The streets are graded and lined with good sidewalks. There is not the dearth of trees in Cheney that marks so many western cities. Many new buildings are being erected this year from brick and lumber manufactured at home, and provisions are made for preventing such disastrous fires as heretofore occurred. Cheney offers advantages that are different from those of most western towns, and it is worth the while of any one looking for farms or delightful homes to examine the merits of that locality. The people are intelligent, industrious and enterprising. Still much closer tillage of the soil would produce correspondingly greater results, and a few lessons in this respect from eastern farmers would be of great benefit.

HAULING IN THE NET.

Salmon fishing on the Columbia is at the lowest ebb this year it has reached for many seasons. At the beginning of the season there was a conflict between the canners and fishermen on the subject of the price of fish, the latter demanding \$1.25 each and the former offering but 75 cents. This lasted nearly two months, during which time the large catches of fish made by a few independent fishermen and by the fish wheels indicated an unusually large run of salmon. Finally, late in May, a compromise was effected at \$1.00, and the fleet of fishing boats began their season's work. Only about 800 boats are on the river, however, being less than one-half the usual number, many fishermen having gone and not so many boats being put out by the owners as in former years. Canneries have not made the usual preparation in the way of cans, and the result is that they are not prepared to handle all the fish that even this small number of boats can catch. The Columbia river pack will be very light this season. On the contrary, the news from Alaska is to the effect that the pack there will be very heavy. The engraving on the first page shows two fishermen hauling in their net and, incidentally, whatever may be in it, preparatory to a sail homeward with their day's catch. Nets are usually 1,800 feet long, and the task of hauling one in and coiling it up in the boat is not an easy one. As a net is worth about \$400, great care is exercised in handling it; and as soon as the fishermen have returned to the cannery to deliver their catch they carefully spread the net out upon drying racks, so that it may not be too soon rotted by constant moisture.