

The Forty-sixth State.

Now that Utah has been admitted to the Union as the forty-fifth commonwealth, we have only four Territories—Alaska, Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma—remaining ; and this number will shortly be reduced by the admission of at least one member of the quartette to the sisterhood of States. Arizona, with an estimated population of only seventy-seven thousand at the beginning of the present year, and New Mexico with one hundred and eighty-five thousand, are knocking loudly at the door of Congress ; and Oklahoma, which is rapidly approaching the three-hundred-thousand mark, has already more inhabitants than thirty-five of the present States could boast at the time of their induction into Statehood. Whenever there is a general agreement within the Territory as to the Statehood question, Congress may be expected to provide for the admission of Oklahoma in short order. Up to the present time, however, the uncertainty as to the ultimate acquisition of additional tracts of Indian lands and the fierce contest of several of the larger towns for possession of the permanent capital have made anything like a concerted effort to secure Statehood impossible. Only a few days ago a Statehood convention adjourned sine die after an exciting but fruitless session, the advocates of the claims of Guthrie, Oklahoma City, and Kingfisher to distinction having worn themselves and each other out to no purpose.

The seven years' record of Oklahoma is unique. On the morning of the 22d day of April, 1889, it was a vast tract of unsettled country. On the evening of the same day it included some thirty or forty thousand people within its borders, all sorts of business enterprises had established themselves as if by magic, towns and cities had been platted on an elaborate scale, and the foundation of a great and prosperous commonwealth had been laid. President Harrison's official proclamation, declaring the western section of the Creek and Seminole reservations open to public settlement, had thus created a new and flourishing group of communities in a single day. In May of the succeeding year a Territorial government was established, and in the interval since that time other Indian lands have been acquired by treaty with the several adjacent tribes, until now Oklahoma is one of the larger American commonwealths. Whether all the original tract known as the Indian Territory is destined to become part and parcel of the new State remains to be seen.

The popular impression of Oklahoma, at least so far as it may have been derived from the comic newspaper press, is that of a " wild and woolly " frontier region; but, while the Territory has been by no means free from the disturbances which appear to be inevitable in the establishment of any new State, it has laid its foundations deep and broad, and may fairly be called another New England, planted in the far Southwest. Its educational establishment, secured by the reservation of two sections of land in every township, extends from the common schools upward to the Territorial University at Norman, with abundant provision for instruction in the intermediate departments. It has a normal school at Edmond, housed in an attractive structure, an Agricultural and Mechanical College at Stillwater, and several denominational colleges and academies. Many of its churches have constructed substantial houses of worship, and hundreds of its commercial blocks and private residences would be creditable to any community. Thus a new commonwealth has sprung up among us almost in a night, rich in natural resources, diversified in scenic attractiveness, strong already in numbers, with a prosperous daily press, important banking institutions and manufactories, electric lights, telephones, telegraphs, railways, and the various other accessories that characterize the typical American community of a far more protracted growth.