

The Daily Astorian.

ASTORIA, OREGON:

FRIDAY, JAN. 28, 1887

D. C. IRELAND, Editor.

Wheat Growing—New Method.

The farmers of this coast, who have a traditional love for wheat growing, will soon be brought face to face with a problem which has troubled the farmers of England ever since America became a great grain exporter. Good farming has enabled the Englishman, in ordinary seasons, to raise a larger number of bushels per acre than his American rival, but the advantage of cheap and unlimited acres, and the opening up of vast tracts of great fertility in this country, have brought the price so low that the English farmer finds wheat growing unprofitable. The American farmers, as a rule, have not kept pace with their English brethren in high-class farming. Major Hallett, in an article in an English magazine on "Wheat-fields at Home," proposes a method to make England independent of foreign supplies of wheat. It looks reasonable enough on the face of it to at least justify a careful and inexpensive experiment. His plan is to double the crop by a change in the mode of cultivation. He asserts that the wheat plant does not reach its proper development when the seed is sown too thick. There are as many heads from one bushel of seed to the acre as from two bushels. When a grain of wheat is put into the ground and allowed ample room, the young plant sends out branches which strike into the ground, and from them numerous stalks grow up, each producing more grain in the head than are ever found when the single seed is so crowded that it can produce only a single stalk. By a calculation which it is unnecessary to follow through its details, he comes to the conclusion that the grains of wheat should be planted nine inches apart, and that this system would double the yield per acre. Should it be found true, a machine can easily be arranged to distribute the seed in the proper quantity. The sowing should be done early enough to give the plant a chance to send out its branches and rootlets in the way indicated above. An experiment might be tried with hand planting by any farmer who desires to test the system. Measure a plot of ground 33 feet each way; it will contain 1,089 square feet, or just one-fortieth of an acre. Mark it into divisions nine inches square, of which there will be 1,336, or 44 to each side. Then put in the 1,336 grains of wheat, and if the crop amounts to one bushel or more (40 bushels or upward to the acre) Major Hallett's theory will be justified. Who will try the experiment?

Southerners have discovered that smooth, strong and pliable parchment can be manufactured from the palmetto of Florida and other southern states. The parchment can be washed, rubbed and handled just like cloth, and the writing will not be effaced. It can be cheaply manufactured, and is likely to come into general use for conveyances, land office receipts, etc. As much as 60 per cent of the weight of palmetto can be utilized in paper making.

Thomas C. Wales, a Boston merchant, who died there the other day, aged 75, failed in 1837, and settled with his creditors for 50 cents on the dollar. In 1859, after some years of prosperity, he paid the remaining 50 per cent. of their principal to his creditors, and in 1866 he paid the interest of twenty-two years on that principal. An instance of this kind is so rare that it deserves to be recorded.

The owners of the Seattle Daily Post have purchased a lot for \$6,000, and intend erecting thereon a three story, stone, fireproof building in which that journal will be published.

Proposed Search for the Jeannette.

Eastern papers are suggesting that an expedition be sent north early in the coming summer to search for the Jeannette, Lieutenant Schwatka to take command of it. It is thought that the government will aid such an enterprise which would unite the scientific purposes of the Jeannette expedition with its search for that vessel. The Herald favors such an expedition, of course, and would contribute largely toward its outfit. Holding the theory that the Jeannette is safe, it says of the proposed effort for her relief: "It is important if such an expedition is to be sent into the Arctic seas, that preparations should be immediately commenced. In the absence of any information from the American Arctic expedition the ablest geographers can but surmise what has happened, and no means for communicating them should be neglected. Unless a steamer, thoroughly fitted to battle with the ice, well manned and officered, can be dispatched in the early part of next summer it will probably be too late to do anything in this direction. The Jeannette is now passing her second winter in the polar regions, whether she went provisioned for three years. But the second winter, as all Arctic travelers report, is a severe strain on those exposed to it, greatly reducing their strength, depressing the most buoyant spirits and developing disease in the weaker part of the crew. Whatever success may have attended the Jeannette, and whatever vista of promise lies before her at the close of August next, her commander will not be able to follow it up unless reinforced by fresh men, nor will he venture to spend a third winter in the high latitudes. It was the fatal error of Sir John Franklin to remain too long in the frozen wilderness, from which the evacuation of his men precluded retreat—an error which, in the sad light of his fate, every competent polar explorer will shun. Could a relief vessel be sent next summer to the Jeannette and overtake her, if her exploratory work demanded more time an exchange of crews as far as desirable might be effected, and the relief vessel return home while the Jeannette might pursue her voyage another year at least. There is still time enough left to fit out an expedition which might communicate next summer via Behring strait with the Arctic steamer if the government authorities now take the matter in hand. Even should such an expedition miss the object of its search its investigations in the polar basin would have their value, and whatever duty the government owes to the expedition already in the far north would be fulfilled."

George Eliot's Romola.

A timely interest is given, by the death of the author, to the new edition of her masterpiece, Romola, just issued by the American Book Exchange, New York. It shows her work at the best and strongest, and at the same time gives the reader the opportunity to acquire a lasting familiarity with the scenes of medieval Italy. It is one of the few really great historical novels of the world. It is issued in handy and beautiful form extra cloth binding, simple but rare elegance and taste in design, and like the other issues of the literary revolution its cost is almost nominal, viz. 35 cents. It is one of a series intended to form a library of classic fiction, which will include one representative and characteristic work of each of the great authors who have won lasting fame in the realm of fiction. Life is too short and too full of work to permit the reading of all that is beautiful and valuable in those creations of the imagination, but even very busy people can find time to read one book by each of the score of authors who have won immortal fame and place in the affections of the people. Not to be acquainted with them is to be ignorant of much that is most important and most interesting in the history of nations and of men. Not to possess them is to be deprived of most faithful and profitable sources of enjoyment. Among those issued or nearly ready are

Scott's Ivanhoe, Bulwer's Pompeii, Irving's Knickerbocker, Cooper's Mohicans, Tom. Brown at Rugby, Adventures of Don Quixote and Uarda, a romance of Ancient Egypt. Full catalogue of standard publications will be sent on request, by the American Book Exchange, tribune building, New York.

Mr. Thielson informs the Walla-Walla Statesman that work on the Oregon Railway and Navigation company's road across the Blue mountains would be prosecuted with vigor as soon as the weather moderated. The road, he says, will follow the Unatilla river, passing within the corporate limits of the city of Pendleton. It is expected that over two millions of dollars will be expended in that country within the next year or two.

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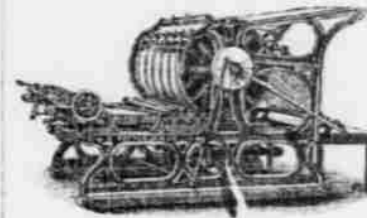
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