

The Daily Astorian.

ASTORIA, OREGON:

SATURDAY, JAN. 29, 1881

D. C. IRELAND Editor.

The Patrons of the Astorian.

The editor of THE ASTORIAN will be a passenger by outgoing steamship State of California, for the east. He will be absent from home about sixty days. In the meantime the paper will be conducted and managed by Messrs. F. W. Baltes and F. C. Norris, to whom all bills must be presented for collection; from whom all orders must be given; and to whom payments on account or otherwise must be made. Mr. Baltes will occupy the chair editorial, and Mr. Norris will have charge of the finances. Any assistance rendered to them by friends of Astoria and THE ASTORIAN will be duly appreciated. D. C. IRELAND.

The tallest trees in the world are in Australia. A fallen tree in Gipp land measured 435 feet from the root to the highest point of the branches. Another, standing in the Dundenong district in Victoria, is estimated to be 450 feet from the ground to the top.

Some idea of the great progress being made in vine culture in California may be formed from the fact that Los Angeles county alone, with 3,683 acres of land in vines, raised last season, 53,000,000 pounds of grapes, making 2,500,000 gallons of wine and 300 of brandy.

Carefully compiled statistics show that during the past year there have been constructed 5,839 miles of new railroads in this country. The roads have been built at an estimated cost of \$30,000,000 per mile, making over \$175,000,000, and most of this money has been expended upon lines west of the Mississippi river.

They have a severe liquor law in Mississippi. Each saloon keeper, or retail dealer in liquors, is required to give a bond of \$2,000 and is liable in that sum if he sells any liquor between twelve o'clock on Saturday night and twelve o'clock Sunday night, or on any election day, or sells to any minor or intoxicated person, or permits, on his premises, any gaming, card-playing or any game of chance, even for amusement. The prosecuting witness receives one-half of the penalty, whether he be a public officer or a private citizen.

Mail advices from New York report that there is a continued scarcity of available vessels at that and the neighboring ports, and the freight market is consequently firm, albeit the demand, as usual at this period of the year, is by no means active. The number of seeking square rigged vessels in that port is a mere bagatelle to what it was at the corresponding period last year. But there is a large fleet heading in that direction, and the chances are that they will have much more tonnage than needed between now and the resumption of navigation.

Captain Hooper, of the revenue cutter Thomas Corwin, who, it will be remembered, made an unsuccessful effort last year to discover the whereabouts of the Jeanette, expects shortly to be again dispatched to the icy north on a second expedition. Captain Hooper has recommended at Washington the necessity of starting early in the season, so as to be at Behring straits in time to enter the Arctic ocean and derive any advantages that may be taken of open water. He will follow the course which he thinks the Jeanette has taken and go as far north, and if permitted, winter there. The officers and crew of the Corwin are all resolute men and experienced seamen. She will be fully equipped for her northern voyage, and will probably sail about the 1st of May.

The Trans-Isthmian Projects.

The past two weeks have been a period of increasing interest in the three trans-isthmian schemes every one of which has now passed of action. The DeLesseps company was the first to act, by putting its stock on the market and securing its officers; the Nicaragua company then secured its officers and put in a bill for incorporation; and Capt. Eads has recently returned from Mexico, having obtained most valuable concessions from the Mexican government. He has not only permission to build his ship railway across the Tehuantepec, but a grant of 1,000,000 acres of land on the Pacific for harbor and terminus, a strip half a mile wide, and a mile wide for stations across the isthmus, power to collect a toll of \$5 a ton on freight of ships and cargo passing over the road, and to build a railway and telegraph line on which ordinary rates shall be charged. In return, Mexican ships of war, munitions, mails, etc., are to be carried free of charge. The road must be begun in two years, and completed in ten, dating from May 1, 1880.

The preponderance of American feeling is still heavily against the DeLesseps scheme, and leading papers denounce it as a fraud on Count DeLesseps' part, denying that its financial success is genuine. In the discussion before the house committee on the 11th instant, with regard to the Panama canal and the Monroe doctrine the Nicaragua minister, Captain Eads and his counsel, and the editor of the North American Review, were among those who appeared in opposition to the canal. Mr. Rich, the editor of the North American, read a private letter from France stating that the French press had been subsidized \$40,000 in favor of DeLesseps scheme.

General Grant's four-column article in the Chicago Tribune of January 11th, was merely a recapitulation of the subject. The important part of the article is the summary of the practical advantages of the two routes. The General calls attention once more to the admitted fact that the preponderating opinion of engineers is in favor of the facilities of the Nicaragua route, and that its surveys have been much more exhaustive and reliable; the more healthful climate of the Nicaragua route, the steadier water supply, and the cost estimated at \$41,000,000, and therefore very sure not to go above \$100,000,000, are contrasted with the sudden floods, the impassable and malarial swamps of the Panama route, the calms of Panama bay, and the engineering difficulties that will bring the cost of this canal to some \$400,000,000. It is, of course, needless to say here, in parenthesis, that the friends of the DeLesseps scheme deny that the climate is more unhealthy in Panama than Nicaragua, that the engineering difficulties are greater or the cost more threatening.

The article in question consists largely of a summary of the need and advantage of a canal, estimating the cost of the Nicaragua one at \$75,000,000, its business at 4,000,000 tons, its expenses at \$1,500,000, and its earnings, therefore, (at \$2 50 a ton) at \$8,500,000. The Pacific coast of North and South America is credited with the most of this 4,000,000 tons, the Asiatic trade being thrown in unestimated.

As to the ship-railroad scheme, no decided rivalry seems to have been roused between this and the canal scheme. Captain Eads, nevertheless, though joining with the friends of the Nicaraguan route to oppose the Panama, urges the advantage of his road over either. It makes the distance from New Orleans to San Francisco, he says, one-third (1,200 miles) shorter than by way of Nicaragua; and his position in general appears to be that Panama is bad, Nicaragua better, but Tehuantepec best. Nevertheless, his plan remains, among the three, farthest in the background of public interest.

Gladstone, the British premier, has done a bold but commendable thing, in refusing to give the sanction of his cabinet to an appropriation by parliament of \$200,000 to pay the debts of that royal scapegrace, the Prince of Wales. He even had the courage to tell Queen Victoria that she ought not to ask the country to pay off the debts of her spendthrift son. If, as the friends of the latter assert, the debts of the prince were incurred by the prince acting as the representative of his mother, then Victoria ought in all conscience and honesty to foot the bills herself. She is rich enough to do so without any trouble.

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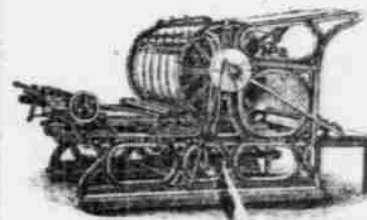
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