

The Daily Astorian.

ASTORIA, OREGON:

SUNDAY.....APRIL 3, 1881

D. C. IRELAND.....Editor.

New York Letters.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

NEW YORK, March 19.—Referring to the Terry fabric works at Greenwich, and to Gen. Serrell, the following report refers to his son most notably in connection with the silk industry of the nation and its great features. This very able report by Consul Peixotto, of Lyons, will be read with interest not only by silk manufacturers, but by every man who has the building up of our national industries at heart:

The United States is no less interested in this serious question. We are now annually producing upwards of \$30,000,000 worth of silk fabrics, and yet not one single silk filature worthy of the name exists in all our broad dominions. Besides we are wholly dependent upon Europe and Asia for our raw material. Two questions present themselves at this juncture: the first is, can we raise silk? The second, can we sell it when we have raised it? The first has already been solved; we can raise silk because we can grow the mulberry leaf which is its essential food. This question has been conclusively determined. Silk worms have been successfully raised in the United States for more than thirty years. The second remains. The impossibility hitherto of competing with the cheap labor of Europe, where the silk reeler receives but thirty cents a day, and of China and Japan, where but from six to ten cents is paid, has been the principal, in fact the only, cause why we have not and could not sell the silk from the cocoon. Every silk manufacturer will admit the desirability, nay for permanent success, the absolute necessity of having his raw material at hand, even as the cotton manufacturer has his. To be absolved from the necessity of importing from Europe and Asia the raw material, would be next to constituting the silk industry with us as one of the greatest sources of our national wealth. It would give employment to hundreds of thousands of hands, women and children, now idle or non-producing; it would at the same time afford the masses an elegant and durable material at one-third less than the present cost, and it would give to capital a new and lucrative source of investment shared at present but by a few individuals, and restricted to exceedingly limited proportions. But how can we overcome the competition of Europe and Asia with regard to labor? I am happy to be able to answer this question here and now. In the month of June last, recommended by the department of state, which under the present administration has done so much to encourage our home manufactures and develop our foreign trade, and provided with letters by the commissioner of agriculture, there came to Europe a young American engineer who, before leaving home had already given much time and study to the subject, and who since has devoted several months to visiting and carefully inspecting the principal filatures of France and Italy. This gentleman, Mr. Edward W. Serrell, Jr., of New York, believed it possible to invent machinery which, by the use and application of electricity, would not only overcome existing difficulties, produce a superior quality of thread, but solve at the same time the all important labor question and render silk reeling in the United States as possible and profitable as anywhere else in the world. It affords me very great satisfaction to say that in my judgment Mr. Serrell has at length been successful, and that very shortly this fact will be abundantly and incontestably proven, both for the now unhappy and rapidly declining silk reeling industry of Europe as well as for, from one American point of view still more important and valuable interest, the successful planting of silk industry in the United States in all its varied stages and branches from the mulberry tree, the magnanise or hatching house, the reeling mill to a still higher perfection than what we have already attained in the fabrication of tissues. What the cotton gin has done for cotton, which with us ninety years ago hardly had a commercial value, the Serrell invention may do for silk, and the United States becomes pre-eminent for the latter and

costlier product as for the former and cheaper culture. The capital point to be derived from these exhibits is the decline of French filatures, and to note that this decline was produced, first, from inferior crops; second, decreased consumption of pure silk goods; third, superiority of Italian filatures; fourth, competition of China and Japan labor; and to add that this deplorable state could easily be revived and resuscitated by the introduction of improved and economical machinery.

COLUMBIA RIVER BAR.**An Intelligent Farmer's Opinion.**

The Hon. John Minto, one of the most intelligent and substantial farmers in the state of Oregon, in a communication to the Willamette Farmer, on the important subject of Columbia River Improvements, says: "I suppose it is of very little importance what an ordinary farmer thinks of the action, or non-action, of such a body as the United States board of engineers, but owing to the very close connection between the facilities for shipping into and out of the Columbia river and the measure of compensation for plowing the land of the Columbia river valley, the report of Major Gillespie to the board of engineers, and of the latter to the secretary of war, and by him transmitted to the United States senate, are very important papers. The report of Major Gillespie is clear in its statement and definite in its recommendations. He proposes, by the construction of a dike, to train the waters of the river (which for many years past have been widening in their outflow by wearing away the beach west and southwest of Fort Stevens to such an extent as to threaten to wash away the fort itself) into a direction that will give security to the fort and depth to the channel recently cut through the middle sand near the center of the outflow of the river at present. In effect, the Major's proposition is to narrow the outflow by nearly two miles, and by consequence make permanent and deepen the present middle channel.

On the other hand, the board of engineers recommended leaving the mouth of the river to the unassisted operations of nature. The report is very obscure; but it is against action, and I confess, to my mind, against reason also, for it does seem to me reasonable that much can be done to deepen and fix the channel in the position (or nearly so) occupied by the single channel reported to exist by Admiral Vancouver in 1792.

Major Gillespie proposes to assist the operations of nature by placing a dike on Clatsop spit that shall make it higher and more solid, and thus prove more effective as an agency in deepening and preserving that middle channel.

The board of engineers object to this line of action because:

First, they think the proposed dike would not be of sufficient extent.

Second, that it might be in the way of some future improvement of the channels.

Third, because natural causes, now at work, would succeed in making the desired breaches through the sand, and operate some other convulsion, entirely changing the present conditions of entrance before effectual progress could be made in the construction of a training wall.

Mr. Editor, the report I have been quoting from shows that if Vancouver was correct there was one wide and well defined channel across the bar eighty-nine years ago, which has, under the unassisted operations of natural causes not been there since. We have then this to calculate on: That there are at least eighty-nine chances against one for the natural causes making us a good channel, and as it may have been hundreds or thousands of years previous to 1792 before these causes formed that one channel there is poor encouragement for the rapidly increasing people whose interests are so closely connected with the improvement of the mouth of our great river to wait for the uncertain working of these causes to give relief.

Clatsop spit is only an elongation of Clatsop plains, which, as alluvium cast up by the combined action of the river and the sea, fills up the entrance to the river to the extent of about one-third its width. This deposit of the current, the winds, and the waves, having been placed there, is removable by these same agencies, and during the short period of steam navigation into the Columbia, farms have been taken off of Clatsop point by the sea, combined with the shallow outflow of the river over Clatsop spit, which thereby widens itself and consequently renders less necessary to the aggregate outflow, the deep channel, or channels,

that our commercial interests require. I am curious to know what the boards of trade of Astoria and Portland are going to do in relation to that report. I'm only a granger, Mr. Editor, and may be ranked by the average commercial and military man as little more sensitive than a cloe, but I confess that the reading of that report of the board of engineers telling the United States senate in such hazy style "How not to do it," gives me some such sensation as I can imagine a warm hearted, earnest man, like Major Gillespie, would have, on being thrown into a snow bank to let natural causes cure him of his disposition to work with nature for the object he plainly says is necessary, and which he reasonably, I think, believes to be attainable."

Some say that it is no use for them to advertise, that they have been in the place in business all their lives, and everybody knows them. Such people seem to forget to take into consideration that our country is increasing in population nearly 40 per cent. every ten years, and no matter how old the place may be, there are constant changes taking place; some move to other parts, and strangers fill their places. In this age of the world, unless the name of a business firm is kept constantly before the public, some new firm may start up, and by liberal advertising, in a very short time take the place of the older ones, and the latter rust out, as it were, and be forgotten. No man ever lost money by judicious advertising.

MARRIED.

In this city, April 1st, by Rev. J. Parsons, Nathaniel Ferrell and Belle Bradley.

NEW TO-DAY.

Henry Ahrens, Henry Tietjen, T. V. Borstel,

CHICAGO BREWERY,

Henry Ahrens & Co., Proprietors,

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