

The Daily Astorian.

ASTORIA, OREGON:

SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 1887

"TAKING DISPATCHES."

For the field, the Oregonian and News probably take as many dispatches as any papers in the Union, though the Seattle Post Intelligencer makes a very large showing in this regard.

The matter of "dispatches" is a singular one—viewed in the abstract. It is a chance operation. A drag net is thrown out and whatever comes is taken. It is almost entirely a matter of quantity, and nine-tenths of it is of no value, not even temporary value. The alliance of the press and telegraph is, of course, a fruitful source of "news." But what kind of "news" is it? Cast your eye over the columns of dispatches; they are filled with accounts of crimes, casualties, accidents, all manner of such things about people you never heard of before and never want to hear of again. What is it that an intelligent public should care so much to hear about? A man was shot in Texas, there was a fall of snow in Canada, a girl has been led astray in New York city; a swindler has been caught in Philadelphia, a baby has been dropped from a fourth story window in New Orleans, a negro has been hanged in Tennessee, a woman in a remote town in Massachusetts has married husband No. 2 regardless of the existence of No. 1, the Delaware peaches are threatened by frost, and so on, for column after column.

Granted that this is desired, it would save considerable expense to have sixteen or eighteen columns of it stereotyped and run at occasional intervals. By a change of date it would have its original value, and satisfy the September quite as well as the April demand. The assumption seems to be that sending an item 2,000 miles over a wire makes news of it. Using the newspaper columns as a dumping ground for the rakings of the rag-pickers is "enterprise." The newspapers pay dearly, very dearly, for the service; they ought to get better quality.

One of the characteristics of our modern civilization is what the doctors call "nervousness." Perhaps the philanthropist or psychologist would call it sympathy. The telegraph has put every little village that has enterprise enough to keep a daily newspaper from starving to death, in sympathy with all the world. This is purely an enlargement of nerve contact. Our bared nerves are played on by a thousand wires. Nature, no doubt, has a method of hardening or deadening the nerves to these shocks, just as stupid and unjust criticism will deaden and thicken thought. Every one who reads the "dispatches," is a focus for all the excitements, ills, troubles, miseries, nastiness and squabbles of the universe.

All of us, gentle and ferocious readers, have our little local cares and annoyances. The money is scarce, or the baby is sick, or John is cross, or the roof leaks, or the wood is wet, or the stomach hurts, or there is a headache, or someone has said something or done something that worries you; the boat hasn't come in, or the clothes didn't come home, or the girl has gone, or the man forget to come or go or send; something is sure to be the matter.

These are the little things that people call "trifles."

In addition to these little home annoyances, the average citizen and citizeness is, in a manner, compelled to be a sharer in the uneasiness of the state, nation, world.

Some folks enjoy a tragedy acted in a theater, and will come out with streaming eyes at the close of the play where vice has been foiled and virtue triumphant, as usual, (on the stage), and say "I enjoyed it." But the most of us take our share of other people's woes in

reading the harrowing tales as told in the "dispatches."

As a study of social ethics it might be worth while to inquire what effect this exciting accumulation of the news of the world upon an individual or a community has upon happiness, upon character.

Is an Astorian any more resigned or rejoiced to hear of the daily causers of what is generally called "the weather" in all sections of this country? Is the average man or woman happier or better in any way by the woful tale of a world's distress and doleful doings, that daily greets us?

Knowledge increaseth sorrow; but, probably, the offset to this is that strength only comes through suffering.

In Russia we have 17 consular officers, only two of whom are citizens of or owe allegiance to the United States. In Austria we have 13 consular representatives, five of them native or naturalized citizens. In France there are 74 consular officers of the United States, 22 of them Americans. In Germany there are 66 consuls and consular agents, 26 of them citizens of the country whose flag they fly. In Italy, out of 41 consular representatives of the United States, only 13 have been appointed from this country. In Spain, out of 82 American consuls and consular agents, only 13 are citizens of the United States, and many of our consuls there are unable to speak any language but Spanish. In Turkey we have 35 representatives, seven of them Americans. Should trouble arise with Great Britain, where one would think there would be the least difficulty in finding an American representing American commercial interests, it appears from a recent report of Consul-General Waller of London, that there are now in the consular corps of Great Britain and Ireland, 116 men—34 Americans and 82 Englishmen." Consul General Waller adds: "The reason that so small a proportion of the consular places in this country is held by Americans undoubtedly is that the compensation such places now offer is entirely too small to induce competent Americans to leave their country to enter the service." Should a turmoil arise in Canada the condition of the service there is still worse. There are 93 un-naturalized Canadians and Englishmen flying the United States flag in the Canadian provinces out of a total force of about 150.

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JOHN FUSSELL. Manufacturer of and Dealer in Harness, Saddles, Bridles, Whips, Brushes, Curry Combs, Etc. None But The Best Stock Used. Prices to Suit The Times. Main street east side, between Jefferson and Squemoqua Sts.

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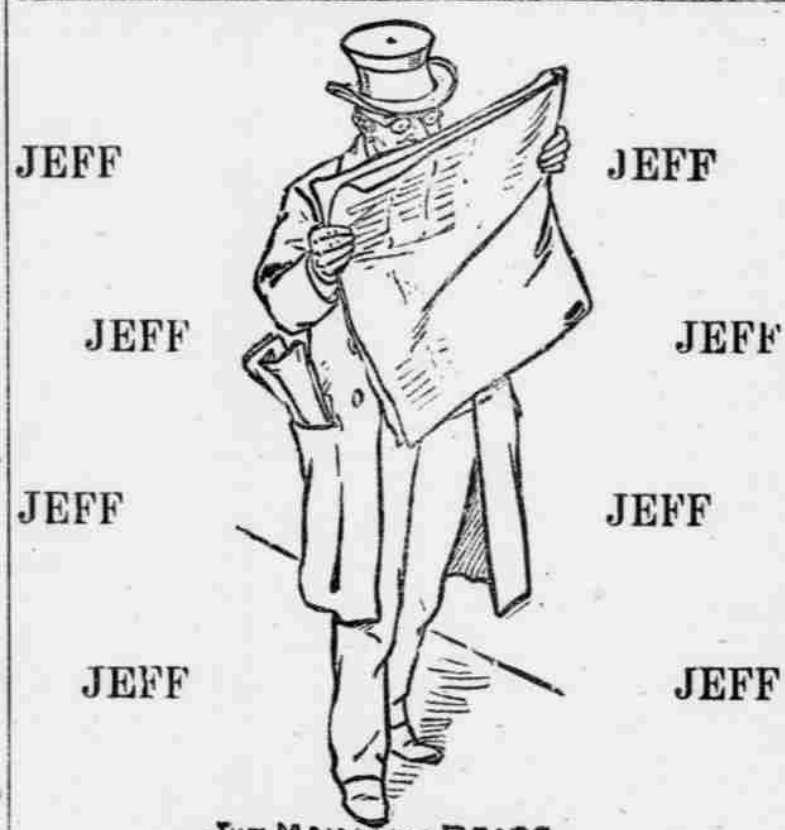
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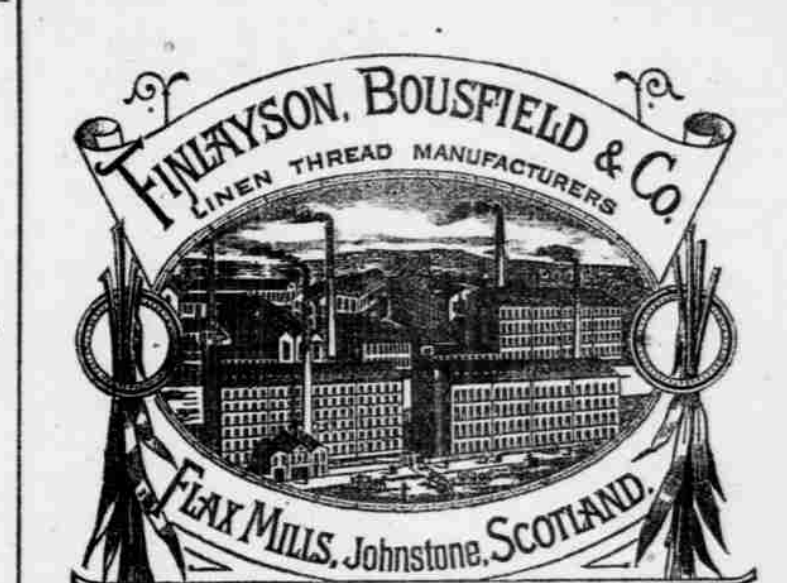
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