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AMERICAN SUPREMACY IN THE IRON TRADE.

It is a significant fact that while it is a recognized feature of our foreign policy that as a nation we should abstain from all interference in European affairs, the course of events is demonstrating that the time is coming, and coming rapidly, when, by virtue of our expanding trade and growing commercial influence, we shall be forced to take a hand in the commercial strife which is, happily, taking the place of the sword in the world's international rivalries.

The Eastern complication is a trade dispute, pure and simple, and whether her motives be disinterested or not, there is much truth in the contention of one leading party to the dispute, that the rapidly expanding trade of the United States should render her deeply interested in the threatening partition of China.

Time was when the vast area and undoubted resources of the unoccupied territory of the United States seemed to justify the statement that we were commercially a self-contained people; that the work of developing the country would give ample employment for all the industrial works which were rapidly springing up throughout the Eastern States. He would have been reckoned a bold prophet who, a generation ago, might have dared to predict that, in the iron trade, for instance, we would, within twenty-five years, not only be capable of supplying our own enormous demand, but would be making successful inroads upon the European trade in its home markets.

During the past decade there has been a gradual increase in the exports of iron and steel from the United States; but the increase for the past year is very remarkable. From 1886 to 1896, the exports of pig iron rose from 7,659 tons to 29,862 tons. During the same period our exports of iron and steel railroad bars rose from 3,969 tons to 27,645 tons. During the year ending June 30, 1897, however, the export of pig iron was 168,890 tons and the export of iron and steel railroad bars was 112,172 tons. The aggregate value of all our exports of iron and steel to Europe during nine months of the year 1897 was \$45,693,000, as against \$34,549,000 during the corresponding period of 1896—an increase of 33 per cent. During the same months there was a decrease in the imports from \$16,361,000 to \$10,032,000.

In estimating the significance of these figures, it is not sufficient to attribute our increasing competition to the depression through which the country has recently passed. While this may have stimulated us to seek a foreign market, we must look to other causes for our successful competition, and these are to be found in improved methods of mining and manufacture and in the unrivaled richness and accessibility of our iron mines, more particularly those of the Lake Superior iron ore region. Nowhere in the world are there such extensive supplies of rich and easily worked ore as are found in this district, and unless similar ore beds are discovered in other countries, we shall possess an advantage which bids fair to fully offset the cost of transportation in competing with European manufacturers.

The Lake Superior ores possess a fourfold advantage: (1) They are extremely rich in iron; (2) they carry a remarkably low percentage of phosphorus; (3) the ore beds are so situated that the cost of mining is low, being reduced in some cases to a theoretical minimum; and (4) the deposits are of vast extent. In regard to the richness of the ore, it is sufficient to say that out of nine grades of ore mined in the Vermilion Range, two show over 67 per cent, three show between 64 and 65 per cent and none less than 60 per cent of iron; in the celebrated Mesabi Range the percentage runs from 59 to 65.5 per cent; in the Marquette Range most of the ore samples over 60 per cent of iron and some of it as high as 67.62 per cent.

Coupled with its richness is the invariably low percentage of phosphorus, which renders it so amenable to the Bessemer process. The proportion rarely runs over 0.1 per cent, and in some cases falls below 0.01 per cent, the average percentage being about 0.06. To these great advantages must be added the fact that the disposition of the ore beds is such that the cost of mining is reduced to a minimum. The ore is taken out by three systems, the first being the regular underground mining. The second is the "milling" system, in which shafts are sunk, drifts are completed, raises are put up to the top of the ore and chutes are put in at the level. The ore body is then drilled and blasted into the chutes. In the third system the mines are worked as open quarries, the ore being dug up by powerful steam shovels and loaded directly onto the cars. In the earlier stages of the open quarry system, the loaded cars are run out of the mine by gravity. The shovels are of great size, weighing in some cases as much as 80 or 90 tons. On the Mesabi Range a 90-ton shovel is at work which is capable of loading 500 tons of ore per hour on the cars at a cost of 15 cents per ton. Even greater records are claimed where the conditions are favorable,

and the cost is said to have been brought down in such cases as low as 10 cents per ton.

As to the extent of the Lake Superior deposits, it is sufficient to give the figures of production. The first mines of this district were opened some forty years ago, and the total output of the most celebrated ranges, with the dates of their opening, are as follows: Marquette opened 1856, output to January 1, 1897, 46,538,187 tons; Menominee, 1880, 22,994,428 tons; Gogebic, 1884, 20,788,787 tons; and the Mesabi, although opened only in 1892, has produced in five years no less than 8,074,583 tons of ore. This mine alone gives indication of containing some 400,000,000 tons of ore, half of which, at least, contains 60 per cent of iron and only 0.06 per cent of phosphorus.

If we were content to rest satisfied with the extraordinary richness and suitability of this princely storehouse, we should be formidable competitors in the world's trade; but when to this is added a ceaseless and successful endeavor to cheapen the cost of mining, transportation and manufacture, it can be seen that our world-wide supremacy is merely a matter of time.

NEW BILLS FOR THE REGULATION OF PRINT AND LABEL REGISTRATION.

Two bills for regulating the registration of prints and labels have been introduced into the House, H. R. 8620, fathered by Mr. John Murray Mitchell, and H. R. 8582, by Mr. Bennett. For a number of years it has been practically impossible to procure any protection for advertising matter, such as labels or prints. Registration was refused under the copyright laws, owing to the fact that advertising matter was not considered as a proper subject for copyright and as not coming within the provisions of the act. There were two reasons why the law failed to afford any protection. The statute of June 18, 1874, provides for recording in the Patent Office "the title of any print or label not a trade-mark." This the Patent Office construed as a bar to the registration of all labels and prints that contain any device used as a trade-mark, or any device capable of sequestration as a trade-mark, until the trade-mark shall have been registered. Coupled with this was the ruling of the Patent Office following the decision of the United States Supreme Court in Higgins v. Kueffel (1891), in which the court held that a label must have value as a literary or artistic composition to a degree that would sustain any other copyrightable matter. The practice of the Patent Office in this regard became so severe that for years it has been practically impossible to prepare a label that would fulfill the exact requirements of the Patent Office. The provision for the registration of labels had become practically a dead letter. In February, 1898, however, the Commissioner decided (ex parte Mahn) that a label may be registered although it contain matter that is or might be construed as proper subject matter for a trade-mark, and he further held that registration should not be refused unless the whole subject matter of the label was in itself a trade-mark and registrable as such. This decision greatly relieved the situation and made it possible at last to obtain protection for labels.

A print, unlike a label, is not applied directly to the goods, but is used generally to describe the goods, as in the case of a pictorial card or advertising device. Until the recent decision of the Commissioner ex parte United States Playing Card Company, the presence of any device of a nature that might be construed to constitute a trade-mark was not registrable, in spite of the fact that it was evident that a print is not affixed to the goods, and until affixed could not be considered a trade-mark. These rulings resulted in hardship to the manufacturer or merchant, as well as to the artist or lithographer, and the refusal to register such subjects because they might contain subject matter that could be considered as a proper subject for a trade-mark was a great injustice.

These pending bills seek to bring order out of chaos by providing that the presence of a trade-mark in a print or label shall not be a bar to registration, and thus give added force to the late decision of the Commissioner by insuring a uniform practice touching the registration of prints and labels in the Patent Office. Modern advertising has come to be regarded as a science, and the talent of our best artists is often invoked to produce results which will arrest the attention of the public and at the same time appeal to the eye and feeling of the beholder. It seems unfair that it has not been possible in the past to protect fully such productions. There is every reason why one or the other of these bills should become a law, and it is to be hoped that the favorable consideration of Congress will be obtained.

Bill No. 8582 contains a provision which is not included in bill No. 8620, and which we think is very important. Under the present practice it is impossible to procure protection for a pack of playing cards without registering with the Librarian each card separately as an engraving, the expense of which is generally so considerable as to prevent applicants from seeking this form of protection. Furthermore, the Librarian often refuses registration on the ground