

Industrial centres in France, for the purpose of discussing the same matters with business classes."

NEW FUEL IN BELGIUM.

I would submit the following translation from L'Echo International. Considering the popularity of this material, and the enormous profits from its manufacture, the article may be read with interest by many at home.

THE FIRE LIGHTER VESUVE.

It is under this denomination that a company is being formed in Belgium for the working of a patented process of manufacturing fire makers of peat and rosin. The low price, enabling all classes to buy it, the intensity of heat, and the extreme rapidity with which it takes fire have made it an article of necessity in every household. It will suppress the use of kindling wood and is superior to any fire lighter invented up to the present day. It does away with the deplorable habit of lighting by means of petroleum. A very little piece of "vesuve" gives instantaneously a good fire. This invention will meet with the same success upon its appearance on the Belgian market that it obtained in Germany.

On December 31, 1898, a dividend of twenty-five per cent. of the entire capital engaged was distributed by the enterprise. It has been demonstrated that on April 12th a profit had been realized sufficient to allow a dividend of seventy-five per cent. The consumption in summer will not be less than in winter, as it has been proven that a fire lighter "vesuve" of the dimensions of $4\frac{1}{2}$ by 2 by 2 inches and weighing from 2 to 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ ounces will burn for a period of ten minutes and give enough heat to boil water.—U.S. Consul Le Bert, at Ghent.

SHOES IN CHINA

The following is a summary of information received from U. S. Consul-General Goodnow, of Shanghai:

"There are no American-made men's shoes for sale here. A good line of shoes would find a market among the foreigners in China. Most of the foreign shoe dealers, however, being English, naturally prefer to handle English goods, and men's shoes come chiefly from that country. Foreign articles sell at \$14 Mexican (\$6.60 gold).

"All foreign clothing, including shoes, can be imported free into Shanghai and to other open ports in China, but when such goods are transhipped into the interior, they are subject to a duty of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. ad valorem.

"American boots and shoes are preferred by most foreigners in China; but before beginning business here, it may be well to take into consideration the number of people here who would be likely to buy and the present condition of trade.

"The foreign population of Shanghai is in the neighborhood of 5,000 and the total number of foreigners all over China (including Hongkong, which is British) probably does not exceed 15,000. To meet their wants, shoes have hitherto been imported in small consignments from England, Germany, and the United States. There are also a number of native and Japanese shoemakers, who make shoes to order at reasonable prices; ladies' shoes, at \$1 Mexican (\$1.88 in United States currency); men's shoes, from \$4.50 to \$6 Mexican (\$2.12 to \$2.83). These prices include patent-leather shoes, which are hand sewed and comfortable as a rule, though in style they do not compare with the American shoe. Patent leather is popular. American and Japanese leather is used for the shoes made in Shanghai.

"As to banking facilities, Shanghai has connections with all parts of the civilized world, and the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation has agencies in San Francisco as well as in New York City, which will be found reliable and accommodating.

"The shoes which natives wear—peculiar to China—are made of cloth or leather. Their cloth boots and shoes have soles half an inch to one inch in thickness, which are made of rags and paper firmly stitched together; these can be bought from 25 cents (gold) upward.

"Native leather boots and shoes, shod with heavy iron nails, are worn in wet weather; they are worth 50 cents to \$1 (gold) per pair.

"If there can be put on the market here shoes as good in quality as those the Chinese make, at a lower price, an unlimited field is open to enterprise. It would hardly be worth while to have circulars, etc., translated."

SHOE TRADE IN ECUADOR.

The following table will show the volume of shoe imports into Ecuador:

Country exporting.	1897.		1898.	
	Silver.	Gold.	Silver.	Gold.
Belgium.....	\$50.00	\$22.45	\$500.00	\$210.50
England.....	13,769.00	6,182.28	22,229.00	9,358.41
France.....	48,190.00	21,637.31	8,369.00	3,523.35
Germany.....	4,627.00	2,077.52	2,980.00	1,254.58
Peru.....	1,200.00	538.80
Spain.....	2,329.00	980.51
United States.....	24,439.00	10,973.11	6,285.00	2,645.99

These figures are from the custom-house records and refer exclusively to foot wear of leather. Duties are charged by gross weight—\$1.67 silver per kilogram.

There is no prejudice against American goods in the country; American shoes are considered higher in grade, and perhaps in price, than those from other countries. The same is true of other lines. A number of prominent firms here carry a small line of American shoes.

Competent salesmen should visit the country, in order to obtain knowledge of requirements and scope of the trade.

Imported shoes are retailed at from \$3.50 to \$8 gold, according to quality. All varieties of finish are on the market, and only an expert can judge of technical requirements.

Trade manuals are useful only in Spanish, as a supplement to the exertions of a salesman; otherwise, they receive no attention and are money wasted.

The merchants of this city are exceptionally substantial, and representatives of firms who have visited this country find results very satisfactory. They would be much more so, were our commerce not handicapped by excessive freight rates via the Isthmus, double and triple those from Europe.—Consul-General P. M. de Leon, at Guayaquil.

CONDENSED MILK IN CHINA.

Fresh milk does not exist in China. Hence this country is an inexhaustible market for condensed milk. It is imported via London or Antwerp and sold by German and English firms. The line most preferred in Hong Kong is the "Milkmaid Brand of Condensed milk"; the label of which shows a Swiss girl carrying a jar of milk on her head together with the inscription "full cream," from the "Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Co., Cham, Switzerland.—French Official Report from Hong Kong.

BUTTER IN HOLLAND.

The Dutch journals and papers are full of the appearance of Australian butters on the Leenwarden market; the prices asked were very low, but the quality was found to be good in spite of the length of the journey. For some time past American, and especially Canadian, butters have been competing with native butter in the Friesland markets.—French Consul-General at Amsterdam.