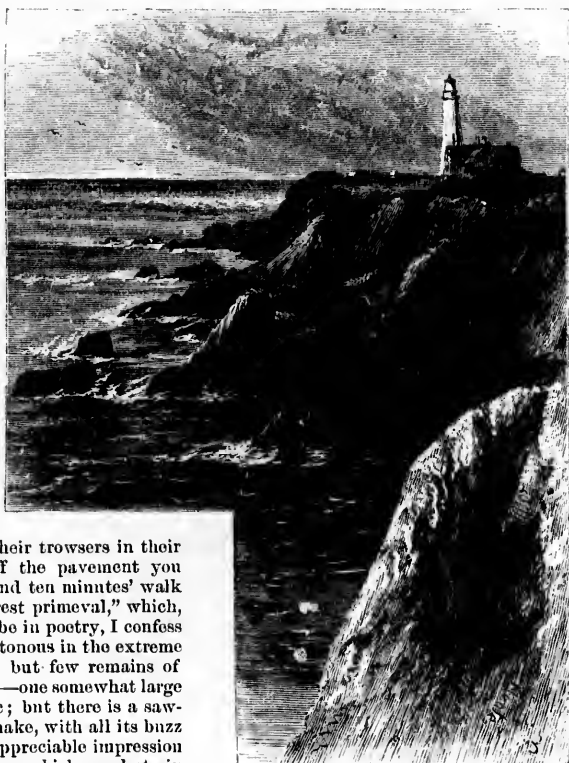


mantic than Astoria is to-day you can scarcely imagine; and what is worse yet, your first view shows you that the narrow, broken, irreclaimably rough strip of land never had space for any thing picturesque or romantic. Astoria, in truth, consists of a very narrow strip of hill-side, backed by a hill so steep that they can shoot timber down it, and is inclosed on every side by dense forests, high, steep hills, and mud flats, and looking now like the rudest Western clearing you ever saw. Its brief streets are paved with wood; its inhabitants wear their trousers in their boots; if you step off the pavement you go deep in the mud, and ten minutes' walk brings you to the "forest primeval," which, picturesque as it may be in poetry, I confess to be dreary and monotonous in the extreme in reality. There are but few remains of the old trapper station—one somewhat large house is the chief relic; but there is a saw-mill, which seems to make, with all its buzz and fuzz, scarcely an appreciable impression upon the belt of timber, which so shuts in Astoria that I thought I had scarcely room in it to draw a full breath; and over to the left they pointed out to me the residence of a gentleman—a general, I think he was—who came hither twenty-six years ago in some official position, and had after a quarter of a century gained what seemed to me from the steamer's deck like a ten-acre lot from the "forest primeval," about enough room to bury himself and family in, with a probability that the firs would crowd them into the Columbia River if the saw-mill should break down.

On the voyage up I said to an Oregonian, "You have a good timber country, I hear?" and his reply seemed to me at the time extravagant. "Timber?" he said; "timber—till you can't sleep." When I had spent a day and a half at anchor abreast of Astoria, the words appeared less exaggerated. Wherever you look you see only timber; tall firs, straight as an arrow, big as the California redwoods, and dense as a Southern cane-brake. On your right is Oregon—its hill-sides a forest so dense that jungle would be as fit a word for it as timber; on the left is Washington Territory, and its hill-sides are



POINT ARENA LIGHT-HOUSE.

as densely covered as those of the nearer shore. This interminable, apparently impenetrable, thicket of firs exercised upon my mind, I confess, a gloomy, depressing influence. The fresh lovely green of the evergreen foliage, the wonderful arrow-straightness of the trees, their picturesque attitude where they cover headlands and reach down to the very water's edge, all did not make up to me for their dreary continuity of shade.

Astoria, however, means to grow. It has already a large hotel, which the timber has crowded down against the tide-washed flats; a saw-mill, which is sawing away for dear life, because if it stopped the forest would push it into the river, on whose brink it has courageously effected a lodgment; some tan-yards, shops, and "groceries;" and if you should wish to invest in real estate here, you can do so with the help of a "guide," which is distributed on the steamer, and tells you of numerous bargains in corner lots, etc.; for here, as in that part of the West which lies much further east, people live apparently only to speculate in real es-