

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### A TRIBUTE TO MR. E. C. HEGELER.

BY F. W. MATTHIESSEN.

Mr. F. W. Matthiessen of the Matthiessen & Hegeler Zinc Company of La Salle, Illinois, responded to the request of the editor of the *La Salle Tribune* with the following tribute to his partner and lifelong friend, Mr. Edward C. Hegeler, which is at the same time an account of the early history of zinc manufacture in the United States as represented by the experiences of these two pioneers in that industry.

"I met Mr. Hegeler in Freiberg in November, 1853. He had already made up his mind to come to America and I had been here before. It was thus natural that we formed an early acquaintance, which afterward ripened into friendship.

"Mr. Hegeler finished his studies in the spring of 1856, but did some important surveying in the mines of Freiberg after that. I had gone to Heidelberg for the summer. We met again in the fall of 1856 and traveled together through various mining districts of Germany, Belgium and England. Thence we sailed on a steamer for the United States, landing in Boston, and immediately thereafter going to New York. In the latter city we learned that at Friedensville, near Bethlehem in Lehigh county, Pa., attempts had been made to make zinc from the ore deposits found at that place. The ore was a fine silicate, but all attempts to produce zinc from it had failed. We were aware that success would be difficult to attain, but Mr. Hegeler looked upon it as an excellent opportunity to test his skill and I would have undertaken anything with him as co-worker. We were successful, and we made some metal. This was all done at our own expense. After attaining our object we found that the company had not sufficiently recovered from the panic of the year before to furnish the necessary funds to properly equip a smelter, in addition to their works for the manufacture of white zinc. We did not feel inclined to invest our money further since we would have been dependent upon a company owning one mine only. We considered that the ore deposits would not stand the additional drain for metal-making, being already taxed to supply the paint works.

"We heard about the discovery of zinc ore in the West and concluded to ascertain what chances there might be out west. We had learned of the existence of zinc ore in southeastern Missouri and in Wisconsin. On our way west we stopped for a few months at Pittsburg, which was the great manufacturing center, believing that by so doing, we might get acquainted with American necessities and American business methods. Then we went and explored the mines in southeastern Missouri. We made investigations with a

view of establishing, perhaps, a smelter in the coal region of East St. Louis. Our experiments with the ore were satisfactory, but we found difficulties in our way on account of political conditions. We could do nothing there. This was in the spring of 1858.

"We then turned our attention to the zinc mines of Wisconsin and were given great encouragement. This was also true when we came to La Salle, the closest coal field to these ore mines, with the object of establishing a smelter here. Especially did the late Alexander Campbell encourage us in our enterprise, obtaining for us the necessary real estate and also a contract with the Illinois Central railroad. We located near the Central tracks and built the first furnace a little north of the present furnaces. Mr. Hegeler had examined the fire clay in St. Louis and had ascertained that it was suitable to our needs. He bought the necessary fire brick in St. Louis and had it shipped by boat to La Salle. And we started to build the factory.

"The first shovelful of dirt was turned up December 24, 1858. We had a furnace running successfully when the Civil War broke out. There being no sale for spelter after the outbreak of hostilities, we ceased temporarily, but commenced operation again when in 1862 or 1863 a lively demand arose for zinc in the manufacture of arms and cartridges. During the cessation of manufacturing we had been making experiments so that when we started again we did so with decidedly improved methods. Our means were limited, and we were very careful in our expenditures. We spent no money that was not absolutely necessary. The history of the factory here is well known and through it the citizens have had many proofs of Mr. Hegeler's sterling qualities.

"Mr. Hegeler was a most untiring and indefatigable worker. Having set out to do a thing, he had the most unyielding determination, the equal of which I have never seen. He deprived himself of all luxuries so that his means would not give out before he had accomplished success. He never did anything for the sake of appearances, but was always firm for what he believed to be right and was always true to his principles and to his convictions, without regard to financial loss or loss of popularity. Even though he considered a protective tariff to favor his personal interest, he did not advocate it, but opposed it. He realized the advantages of a tariff to manufacturing, but believed in the principle of free trade, and always stood by that principle. He had the courage of his convictions and acted accordingly. Having once decided that a certain line of conduct was correct, nothing could sway him from that course; and in business, having conceived an idea, he would leave nothing undone to bring it to success. Mr. Hegeler was always willing to tackle the most difficult problems. He would work night and day with little or no rest in order to solve them, and he usually succeeded. He had great energy, tenaciousness and perseverance.

"The death of my old friend is a source of great sorrow to me, but I certainly consider it a privilege to have enjoyed the friendship, companionship and confidence of a man so eminent as Edward C. Hegeler."

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#### HOME AGAIN.<sup>1</sup>

BY T'AO CH'ÏEN (A. D. 365-427).

[T'ao Ch'ien is a name still familiar to all students of poetry in the Middle Kingdom, says Professor Giles from whose *History of Chinese Literature* we

<sup>1</sup> Translated by James Black.