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Meteoric Iron Stones.

In some parts of the world, blocks, or rather loose stones of iron have been found lying on the ground, slightly embedded in the soil, and far removed from any rocks containing iron. These iron stones have been proven by analysis to be nearly pure iron, generally containing a little nickel—malleable, capable of being beat cold under the hammer into thin sheets, almost unoxidizable, and, for every purpose in the arts, equal to the best manufactured iron. There has been no more reasonable theory of accounting for their origin than that of attributing to them a meteoric source—projected, perhaps, from some of the volcanoes of the moon.

A few days since we had a visit from Mr. Charles Burchard, residing in Monterey, Mexico, who presented us with a specimen, and exhibited other specimens, of meteoric iron which he discovered in a Mexican valley near Santa Rosa, and which is, perhaps, the finest deposit of meteoric iron hail-drops in the world. In that spot there are twelve meteoric iron blocks, ranging in weight from 100 lbs. to 1 ton, some of them lying on the bare rock, and others slightly embedded in the soil. All of them have a clear ring, like bell-metal, and their surface is covered with but a thin film of red oxyd.

How and whence came they in that wild and secluded spot? They have the appearance of having once been in a plastic state, united in one mass, and to have burst into pieces.

Striking Effects of Civilization.

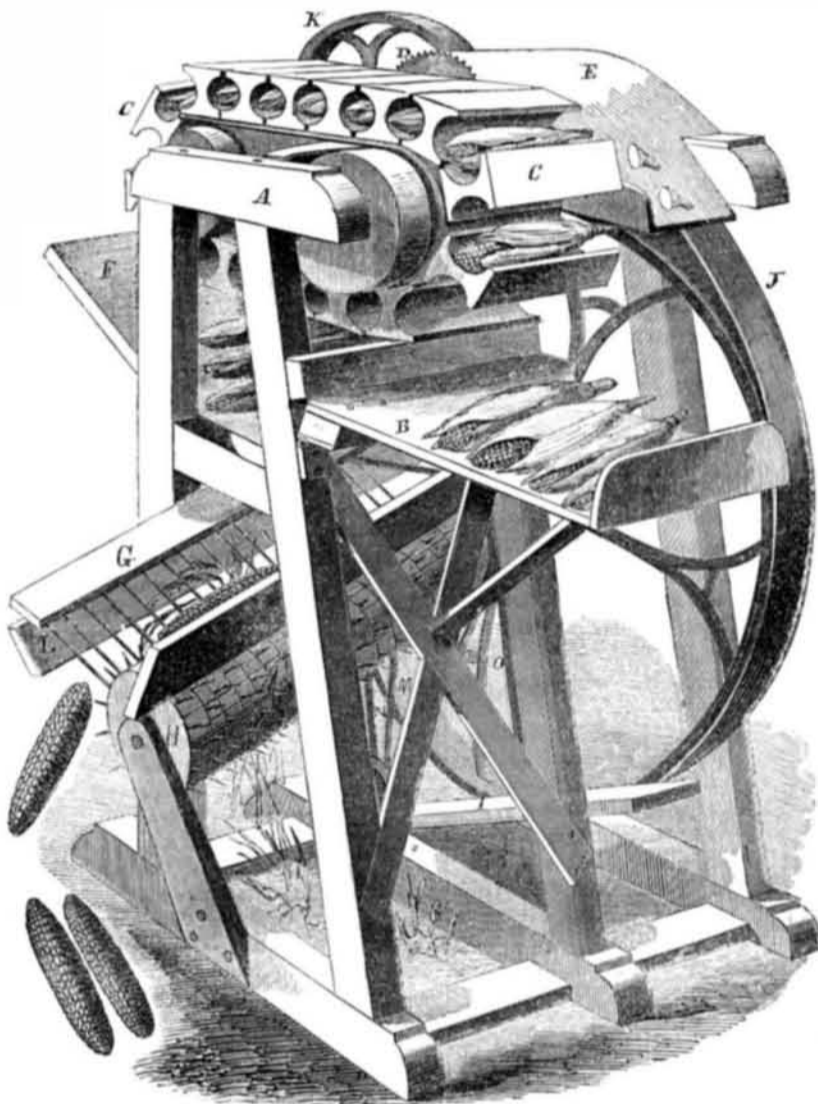
French journals state that the Rev. Dr. Livingston, the celebrated African traveler, has returned to England, after seventeen years' absence. He crossed the great African continent almost in the center, from west to east, has been where no civilized being had ever been before, and has made many notable discoveries of great value. He has great difficulty in speaking a sentence of English, having disused it so long while traveling in Africa. He had with him a native from the interior of Africa. This man, when he got to the Mauritius, was so excited with the steamers and various wonders of civilization that he went mad, and jumped into the sea and was drowned.

Ship Building at New York.

During the past year there were launched at New York 12 steamers, 11 ships, 12 barques, and 20 others, with an aggregate tonnage of 15,620 tons; while there are on the stocks 6 steamers, 3 ships, 3 barques, and 9 others, whose aggregate tonnage will amount to 17,150 tons. This result shows an increase in the amount of tonnage launched, of 6,038 tons over the year 1855; while the tonnage of vessels now on the stocks is 6,145 tons less than at the same time last year.

Many of the steamships belonging to New York have been very unfortunate during the past year. The Collins' line has lost one, and those belonging to Commodore Vanderbilt have been laid up, and have done nothing for a number of months.

CORN HUSKING MACHINE.



This figure is a perspective view of a machine for husking corn, for which a patent was granted to Messrs. Taggart & Grover, on the 9th of December last.

A is the frame of the machine, and B is a table for holding the ears of unhusked corn ready to the hand of the operator. C is a revolving endless apron of adjustable clamps to receive and hold the ears of corn firmly, to have their butts cut off by a small circular saw, D to sever the husks where they are attached to the root ends of the cobs. The cut-off stubbs of the cobs fall on the inclined board, E, and roll down upon the floor or into a receptacle. The clamps are made of wood, secured on the flexible endless apron, and are so formed that they open out when passing over the end roller where the ears are put in, as shown, and then close as they move along. They are of a round form, to hold the ears firm when passing on a level to the action of the saw, as shown. The ears of corn, after their butts are cut off, drop down at the back end of the apron, C, upon the inclined board, F, thence into an inclined grating, G. Below the grate there is a revolving roller, H which has projecting spikes in its periphery. As the ears pass down on the grate, G, the spikes on this roller, projecting between the wires of the grating, catch the husks, and strip them off, and the clean ears then drop down, as represented, while the husks are carried below the roller. There is a back bar, L, on the frame of the inclined grating, in which are a series of small strong wire rods, which are inclined, and project into the circular grooves on the spike roller. These wires strip the husks from the spikes.

The spike roller is revolved by a band and pulley, and so is the saw spindle, and the endless feed table, C. This machine is adapted

for being worked by a foot treddle, like a common hand lathe.

The operator stands in front of the table, B and while he feeds the unhusked ears into the clamps on the apron, C, with his hands, his foot vibrates treddle I, at the back of which it is connected to a crank, which gives motion to a pulley, from which, by straps, N M, the spike roller, H, the band wheels, J and K, receive motion, and through them, the small circular saw, D, and the feed table, C, are rotated. The husks, as they drop from the spikes, are ready for use, to be put into mattresses, without further preparation. All the parts of this machine are strong and simple, and not liable to get out of order.

With a machine like the one represented, driven by foot, two men can husk about four hundred bushels of ears in a day—40 bushels is a day's work for one man, therefore two men can husk as much corn with this machine as ten by hand. If driven by horse, water, or steam power, for which it is also adapted, of course it will do a great deal more work.

We have seen certificates of H. B. Brigham and H. L. Gliddon, farmers, one living at Brookline, and the other in Brighton, Mass., who operated this machine on their farms upon two separate occasions, one man driving it with his foot, and it performed as much work as ten men by hand.

Corn husking by hand is tedious and troublesome labor. A good corn-husking machine is an invention long sought after by our farmers as being one of the most needed and most useful. One of these machines may be seen at the Agricultural Warehouse of Messrs. Maher & Co., No. 197 Water st., this city.

More information respecting this corn-

husker may be obtained by letter addressed to Messrs. Grover, Osborn & Banker, Roxbury, Mass.

Cable for the Atlantic Telegraph.

A section of the cable intended for this telegraphic line has been on exhibition at the Merchants' Exchange, this city; it is of peculiar construction. It is three-fourths of an inch in diameter. In the centre are seven small copper wires, twisted upon themselves, and the whole insulated by a thick covering of gutta percha. Eighteen strands of slender iron wire, each strand composed of seven threads loosely twisted upon themselves, constitute the outer covering. The weight of the whole is 18 cwt. to the mile, and its strength such that it will bear in water over six miles of its own length if suspended vertically. Its specific gravity is such that it is thought there can be no question about its sinking readily to the bottom, being much heavier than the shells brought up by sounding. The objection that the strands of wire forming the outer covering will suffer corrosion or decomposition, is met by the statement based, it is said, on satisfactory experiments, that in corroding, the material of which the outer covering consists will enter into chemical union with the soft mud in which the cable is embedded, and will thus form a concrete mass of calcareous or siliceous substance, affording its very best possible protection. The gutta percha and central copper wire are thought to be indestructible under water. The flexibility of the cable is such as to make it almost as manageable as a small hemp line. Its selection was the result of months of experiment and trial—hundreds of specimens having been made, comprising every variety of form and size and structure, before this particular one was agreed upon.

It is to be manufactured by a company in London, and is to be 2,600 statute miles long, although the distance between Newfoundland and Ireland is only 1,900 miles; the inequalities of the ocean's bottom require it to be 700 miles longer than the actual distance between the two shores.

The cable is to be completed by the 30th of next May. Two steamers, each bearing half of the cable, will directly sail from London for the middle of the Atlantic, and will head different ways, "paying out" as they go.

Railway Festival.

The employees of the New York Central Railroad hold their annual festival on the 14th of January at Syracuse. The preparations have been made on a scale of liberality and expense seldom reached on such occasions, and the managers intend making an interesting thing of it. It is far better for the employees of all roads to have something of this kind once a year, by way of excitement, instead of holding "conventions" or striking at the enforcement of rules of safety. The best feature of these railway festivals is, that the proceeds derived from the sale of tickets go to increase the fund for the relief of employed men who have been injured on the road, and the families of those who have been killed. Thus it is a work of charity to attend one of them.—*American Railway Times.*

Losses by Fire in the United States.

The number of fires in the United States during 1856, at which the loss exceeded \$20,000, was 227, and the damage was \$21,160,000, while the number for 1855 was 198, and the losses \$13,043,000. If we add to the above the amount of property destroyed by fire, where the loss was less than \$20,000, we find the aggregate would probably reach \$27,000,000 for 1856, and \$19,000,000 for the preceding year.—*Philadelphia Ledger.*