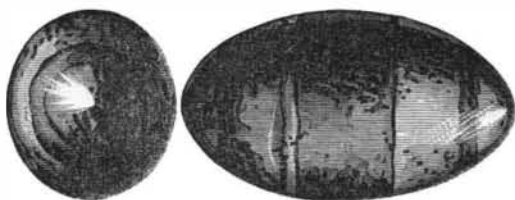


THE MAD STONE.

There is a superstition, or a popular belief, "as old as the hills," that certain stones, or mineral substances, possess the power of extracting the virus of poisonous bites from the human system. We frequently hear of wonderful cures performed on those bitten by venomous reptiles, or insects, by its means. In No. 11, Vol. XV., current series, we published a statement of such a case from an Indiana correspondent, in which it was said that the stone was procured from the "rennet of a deer."



Such a stone has been shown us, from which the accompanying engravings are made. The illustrations represent the curiosity in full size, one a longitudinal and the other an end view, showing the shadings on its surface. It will be seen that the stone is almost a perfect ellipsoid, slightly flattened in the line of its shorter axis, as may be noticed in the transverse view. From its weight and appearance it seems to be composed of phosphate of lime.

This stone was brought to us by Mr. Er Lawshe, of Atlanta, Ga., who gives the following account. It was taken from the stomach of a deer shot in Houston county, Ga., by David Halliburton. Similar concretions are not unusual in the deer's stomach; those which are young having small ones, sometimes not larger than a pea while in older animals they are much larger. This is one of the largest Mr. Lawshe has seen. His experience of its reputed medicinal virtues is limited. His brother, in swarming a hive of bees, was stung on the back of the neck, and this stone, having been heated in warm water, was applied to the swelling one minute, when the pain and swelling together disappeared. Mr. Lawshe states, on the authority of hunters in his section of the country, that the deer feeds with impunity on the wild, or poisonous ivy, his escape from death being attributed to this stone. In one case a hunter killed a deer while browsing on the ivy, and although the flesh was eaten by himself and others without bad effects, his dogs, who eat the entrails, died.

All this seems to be somewhat doubtful, yet there are many cases related of the virtues of this stone. The specimen under consideration appears to be a water-worn pebble, and totally unlike the concretions found in the bladder of the human body which are indicative of disease. In the opinion of some of our chemists and geologists, to whom it has been submitted, it cannot be a product of animal disease, but is unmistakably a mineral production, accidentally or purposely swallowed by the animal. They do not subscribe to the popular belief in its virtues, and attribute its professed effects to imagination. As a curiosity, however, without regard to the fact or falsity of the assumptions made for it, we considered it of sufficient interest to engage the attention of our readers. Knowing nothing practically of the value of these curious natural productions, we presume to offer no opinion on the subject of their medical properties. It has been suggested that the material for these stones is found in the calcareous and silicious soil about the salt licks, which deer frequent, and that, being of an indigestible nature, it remained in the stomach, gathering gradual accretions, and by muscular action being slowly "rounded into form."

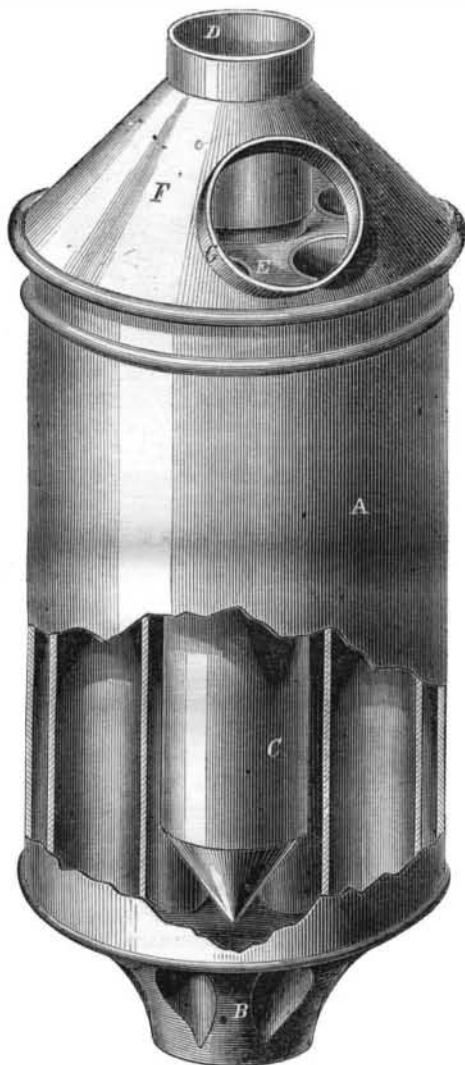
This opinion receives some force from the fact that similar stones called "bezoars" have been known and used in the East from time immemorial, and are usually found to be concretions surrounding some foreign substance in the stomach of ruminants. The pearl is said to be formed in a similar manner, and the Chinese introduce beads and small images into the pearl oyster, which in time become coated with the substance.

THE total earnings of railways in the United Kingdom amount to over \$200,000,000 annually.

MORSE'S STOVEPIPE FURNACE.

The desideratum of utilizing all the heat from combustion has been sought by attempts to burn the smoke and gases of a fire, but has not yet been effectually attained. Appliances have been devised to arrest a portion of the heated air in its progress from the fire to the external atmosphere. The invention here illustrated is of this character, and the inventor declares it to be entirely successful.

It is a cylinder, A, of tin or other sheet metal, having a cast-iron bottom, B, which receives one end of the stove funnel. In the center of the drum, A, is a cylinder, C, closed at the bottom by a cone-shaped cover, and opening at the top, D, to receive the prolongation of the stove funnel. Surrounding this central tube are others, placed at equal distances, and open at the bottom at B, and at the top at E. These are merely conductors for the atmospheric air, while the smoke and gases of the fire rise through the funnel at B, and pass up between the central and surrounding tubes heating the air in the



latter. The cone-like bottom of the central cylinder diverts the smoke on all sides to the walls of the other cylinder, thus surrounding the air tubes.

When the heat is required in the room where the stove is situated the cone cover, F, is not used. It is intended to retain the heat and divert it through the aperture, G, whence it is led by a pipe to any room desired. It is claimed that by this waste heat from an ordinary cooking stove, rooms may be dried and warmed, or fruit or clothes dried in a closet or attic, which could not be heated by any other means.

Patented through the Scientific American Patent Agency, March 6, 1866, by E. P. Morse, Batavia, N. Y., who will furnish any further information.

AN official report shows that in British India, there are 4,971 miles of railways in course of construction, of which 3,213 miles were in working order last spring.

THE Chicago and Northwestern Railway has 1,020 miles of main track open, and within a year it will be completed to the Missouri river and connect with the Pacific Railroad.



Grain Elevators--Grain Trade.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—In the number of Sept. 15th, under the head of "How Grain is Stored in New York," you state the amount received in New York, and you also give a description of the fire-proof "United States Elevator and Stores" in Brooklyn.

The grain trade is a marvel in its volume, and over twenty years ago began to necessitate grain elevators in its movement. Mr. Barton, in a historical lecture a few years since, in Buffalo, stated that the "Dart Elevator" was the first one in that city, built in 1844, and I think the first one in the country for storing and transferring grain.

With the design of obtaining the correct history of this great institution in our country—grain elevators—I have at different times urged the Commissioners of the Agricultural Department to issue a circular to the Board of Trade of the various cities, from New York to Chicago, by which to obtain the capacity of each elevator in the respective cities, with full description and cost, but have been unsuccessful in my efforts. It would be quite an appendage to the Paris Exhibition if one of our mammoth elevators were there in full operation.

Europe is far behind us in this matter, though they have never had such vast quantities to handle in transportation. In the grain ports of the Danube the grain is carried in sacks on men's shoulders from the storehouse to the vessel. Dantzic, a Baltic port and a grain mart for centuries, had, at the period of Mr. Jacob's "Parliamentary Report of the State of the Corn Trade in the North of Europe, 1826," but indifferent facilities for handling grain; and the poor methods of transportation descending the river Vistula only forty years ago, which he describes, would be surprising to men on the line of the vast grain tide that flows from Chicago to New York.

During two years of our late war it is an astonishing fact that, exporting each year over 50,000,000 of bushels of cereals to Great Britain, we furnished the 29,000,000 of the population of the United Kingdom bread food for one meal in three of their daily bread for that period, beside liberal supplies to her dependencies in other parts of the world, and also to other foreign countries. Such a grain export from any one country is unparalleled in the history of commerce.

It may be further remarked that, from a scale of prices published in the Parliamentary returns, of grain imported from the different countries, by a calculation which I have made, the wheat from the United States was 16 per cent better in price and therefore better quality than that of the combined average imported from other countries. Yet was our export of wheat of an inferior quality to the average of that sold in our own markets, so that the people of England, in the mass, subsist on a poorer quality of bread than do the people of the United States, we should say 20 per cent poorer in quality, even modified by taking into the account their own English-grown wheat.

You speak of canal boats unloading at the Brooklyn elevator. A short time since, being on the *Dean Richmond*, I noticed the large number of "tows" we met and passed in the course of the two hours' daylight before reaching New York at 7 A. M. At this rate quite a fraction of the area of the river from New York to Troy must be occupied continually by the "tows" during navigation. I was reminded of the words of that powerful pleader, Elisha Williams, of Hudson, who, in a speech in the legislature advocating the passage of the Canal Bill, in 1817, earnestly appealing to the New York delegation, who opposed the canal (!), to win them over to the measure. Said he, "If the canal is to be a shower of gold it will fall upon New York; if it is to be a river of gold it will fall into your lap."

Kinred to these words of Mr. Williams was the prophecy of the late Jesse Hawley, the originator of the "Erie Canal," in his Canal Essays, published in the *Ontario Messenger*, at Canandaigua, in 1807, the year of Fulton's first trip to Albany by steam, and