

WHERE SULPHUR IS FOUND.

Sicily Threatened With Competition From Deposits in Louisiana.

If the sulphur deposits recently reported from Louisiana are really abundant, their discovery is a matter of importance. Hitherto the chief important deposits of elementary sulphur known to the civilized world as those of Sicily, those of the Italian mainland, of Spain, France, Transylvania, Poland, Germany, and the Island of Formosa. The deposits in Formosa, now that Japan has come into possession of that island, are likely to be developed in the interests of Japan's military progress. Mount Pinace, in the United States of Columbia, has a sulphur cap of nearly 1,500 square yards that gains annually two feet in depth. There is a sulphur deposit at Salsalar, in the Red Sea, that yields about 600 tons of sulphur annually—a mere trifle compared with the commercial product of the world. There are sulphur deposits in Armenia, high in the sides of volcanoes, which are worked chiefly with the rifle, great masses being dislodged with rifle balls shot from a distance below. A sulphur deposit in California was once supposed to contain many tons, although the whole would be insignificant compared with the annual demand of this country.

Sicily has for a great many years supplied the civilized world with sulphur. The Sicilian deposits are amazingly rich, but are worked with a reckless wastefulness and almost total neglect of modern labor-saving devices. Even now only a few of the mines use machinery for hoisting the sulphur to the surface. Boys from 12 to 18 years of age are employed in the others for this purpose, and there is a curious custom of paying the miners and permitting them to hire for themselves carriers at what price they may. Doubtless the conservation of the Sicilian peasant has made it difficult to supersede this crude method of getting out sulphur.

The Sicilian method of procuring pure sulphur from the crude material is wasteful in the extreme. A pit is dug in the hillside, about thirty-three feet in diameter and eight feet deep, and this is filled up with the crude sulphur. It is then fired from the top and permitted to burn so long as it will. The pure sulphur runs out below and is collected in a stone vessel, and then ladled into deep poplar-wood molds. These molds give the truncated cones of sulphur known to commerce, and weigh from 110 to 130 pounds each. A pit containing from about 28,000 cubic feet of crude sulphur yields in two months 200 tons of the pure sulphur. A large quantity of the crude sulphur is thus consumed in burning the rest, so that a comparatively small percentage of the pure sulphur is obtained from the mass. The method is, besides, most unwholesome both to man and to vegetation. Strict laws prevent the burning of sulphur within a certain distance of human habitation or growing crops, and the region where sulphur burning is general is a dreary waste. The scarcity of fuel in Sicily has seemed to render necessary this crude method of reducing the ore. More scientific methods have been introduced at the sulphur deposits of the main land, where the ore is reduced by the use of steam. Very pure sulphur is obtained by the use of sulphate of carbon in reducing the ore. The pure sulphur is obtained by distilling Sicilian sulphur. Most of the Sicilian sulphur is used in the production of a sulphuric acid.

The production of sulphur in Formosa under the Chinese rule was a crown monopoly. Whether it shall thus remain under the rule of the Japanese or not, the system is likely to be modernized, and if the deposits are rich enough Formosa may become an important competitor with Sicily in supplying the needs of the civilized world. The advantage of the discovery of crude sulphur in large quantities in the United States would be the prompt application of thoroughly scientific and economical methods to the reduction of the ore, and it is probable that were rich sulphur ores developed in the United States sulphur could be produced there as cheaply as in Sicily, by reason of the fact that the waste would be small in the production of sulphur by scientific methods. Sicily has over 300,000 men of sulphur, and between 25,000 and 30,000 men are employed in the sulphur industry. They have for years past been a disappointed and unhappy body of workmen, and the condition of the industry is extremely bad. Some years ago it was estimated that the sulphur deposits of Sicily still contained 50,000,000 tons, which would mean a supply at the present rate of consumption for over 100 years. The discovery of paying sulphur mines in the United States would doubtless attract hither more Sicilian immigration, and have an important effect upon the wages and upon the whole sulphur industry in Sicily.—New York Sun.

Population of Japan.

A report received at the Department of State from Consul General Melvor, at Kanagawa, Japan, gives the population of that country in 1894 at 42,000,000. Adding Formosa, which became part of the country by the late treaty with China, the population is estimated at 45,000,000. The area of the country is given at 26,326 square miles. Compared in extent with European countries Japan stands next to Spain, being about equal to Sweden. She is larger than Great Britain and Ireland 6,933 square miles, and is the eleventh largest country in the world. Compared with Great Britain and Ireland she has 7,100,000 more people and in population ranks as the fifth power in the world. The estimates given, Mr. Melvor says, are conservative and reasonable.

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Young Bellamus hitched forward in his chair, pulled up his trousers a little at the knees, glanced at his cuffs to see that they projected the proper distance beyond his coat sleeves, and nervously began.

"I have something to say to you, Kate, I—don't turn your face away from me, please. You have not been eating onions have you?"

"Sir!"

"Neither have I. Listen to me. There is something resting on my mind—"

"Impos—"

"Resting on my mind, I say, and it has become a burden, that I am going to shake off. Now, there isn't any use in your pretending you haven't any idea what I want to talk about."

"Assuming that I do, Mr. Bellamus—"

"Well?"

"Let it pass. Go on."

"That's right. You act like a good sensible girl in deciding to hear me. You might as well anyhow, because when I get started I'm hard to stop, and I am going to say what I came here to say this evening if it takes all—if it takes a quarter of an hour. That's the sort of desperate lover I am, Kate Naggus, though I didn't mean to give the whole business away in one breath like that. I intended to lead up to it gradually. I don't suppose, however, the shock of surprise was very great. You had an idea something of the kind was coming, didn't you?"

"Rather."

"I knew you did. But it doesn't seem artistic to block out a regular form of doing something and then fly the track and jump across lots in order to get there sooner. What I intended to say was about like this: Ever since I have known you I have had a different feeling toward you from which I entertain toward other—but before I go any further I'd like to have some hint as to whether I'm wasting my time or not. Somehow I don't feel quite as confident as I did when I began."

He stopped a moment, took a long breath and inquired uneasily:

"Is it of any use for me to go on, Kate?"

The rosy lips of the fair young girl parted and she softly answered:

"Not."

"That settles it," rejoined Mr. Bellamus, recovering himself and drawing on his gloves. "It hasn't turned out exactly as I hoped it might, but I've saved at least ten minutes of valuable time for each of us, and that makes twenty minutes, I don't know what your time is worth, but my time computed from a business point of view, is worth \$2.50 an hour. I will not detain you any longer, Miss Naggus. Good evening."—Chicago Tribune.

FOR LUCK IN MARRIAGE.

The Queer Idea of Some Sewing Girls in the Making of Wedding Gowns.

One superstition that exists among sewing girls and their associates of Paris and New York is that if the head dressmakers will stitch into wedding garments a single hair from the head of each they will become brides within a very short time after the maiden who wears the bridal outfit then in preparation. A young woman of experience and with a quick eye for what would interest The Sun's readers said to a Sun reporter the other evening:

"Let me tell you of this strange and yet pretty superstition which exist among some of the sewing girls in Paris and New York. I am more familiar with the superstition as it exists among the girls of some of the bigger dry goods shops in New York city, and so in this instance I will confine my story to them. When the sewing girls in the different apartments and the girls behind the counters learn that the house has received an order for a big trousseau they besiege the head dressmakers and ask them to stitch into the wedding gown especially a single hair from their heads. This hair is so fine that it is easily concealed and cannot in any way mar the beautiful wedding gown. The head dressmakers very often humor the girls.

"I know positively that this superstition exists, and I know positively that in many wedding gowns, could they be picked to pieces, would be found many hairs stitched in. The girls when they go home at night tell their girl friends that a hair from their heads has been stitched into the wedding gown of Miss So-and-So, and the lucky one is immediately envied. She will be married very soon, her associates say.

"Many of the girls in the big shops secure bits of the wedding gowns of fashionably brides. They take them home and treasure them up. They make collections of them, and they point them out to their friends in the neighborhood, saying, 'That was Miss So-and-So's wedding gown,' and so they go through the list. The sewing girl who possesses the greatest collection of these bits is a very important young woman in the eyes of her young woman friends. She is considered to be almost fashionable herself, because she is so near the throne. But by far the prettiest superstition that I have yet heard of is the one where a single hair from so many of these shop girls is stitched into these very expensive wedding gowns."—N. Y. Sun.

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