

NATURAL GAS SUPPLY.

THINGS ABOUT THE NEW SOURCE OF COMFORT AND WEALTH.

Gas Yielding Territory of the United States—George Washington as an Investor—A Catastrophe in China—An Incident—Official Reports.

Where in the United States are the chief sources of supply for natural gas? This is a question that countless people have been trying to answer, and it is said that the people of every state in the Union except the New England states and the four most southerly Atlantic seaboard states have quite lost their equilibrium in attempting to show that the chief supply is right under the crust of real estate which they themselves happen to occupy.

Such a spectacle would be somewhat ludicrous were it not that the electric illuminations in the present status of scientific knowledge is obliged to confess that dull gas is one of the elementary forces to which it owes its own being. But the search has been generally futile. Except in Kansas gas has been found in paying quantities only in that portion of the Mississippi valley which lies east of the great river and along the borders of the mysterious geological formation known as the drift.

The considerable supply found in Kansas is so far west of the main sources that it suggests escaping gas caused by some fissure or fault in the drift formations. Yet the search goes forward, though possibly with relaxing interest. It is felt that the cavernous west and south may furnish still other natural pipe lines to convey gas for general distribution over half the continent.

Natural gas has been long known. The village of Fredonia, in this state, near the lower end of Lake Erie, has been lighted by it nearly, if not quite, fifty years, and the father of this country is found to have been the first speculator in natural gas. He came in possession a very long time ago of what were then known as the burning springs in the Kanawha valley, Virginia. These so-called springs were only the result of a natural gas freak, though to the people of those early days, before the discovery or invention of a process for making coal gas, they must have furnished a mysterious phenomenon.

The idea of Washington, however, in obtaining possession of the property was not a speculation in light or fuel, but a speculation in salt, as more properly became the savior of his country. In China, too, a country to which we must always go when we think ourselves exclusively entitled to the credit of some new discovery, the people have known all about natural gas many hundred years. It is even reported that a great catastrophe happened in China as a consequence of the reckless use of this illuminant, the catastrophe having been nothing less than the explosion of an immense subterranean gasometer which underran a country large enough for several kingdoms. The precise number of people who perished at the time is not recorded, but, considering the population of the country, it must have been large. So natural gas, it will be seen, has played a very tragic part in the world's history, if an inanimate substance can be said to play tragedy.

This Chinese story lacks but one element to give it a horrible interest, and that is the element of possibility. No air can go where gas holds possession; and you could not have combustion and a consequent explosion without air. Some information in relation to the natural gas wells of China has been given recently to the state department by Mr. Charles Denby, the American minister to that country. Mr. Denby describes a territory about nine miles in diameter, where brine, suitable for the production of salt, is found at a depth of 700 to 1,000 feet below the surface.

Below these salt reservoirs are found at a depth of 1,800 or 2,000 feet from the surface, gas is found. It is reached by means of rade iron drills fastened to a rope and operated in bamboo pipes, which are gradually forced into the ground as the earth below is displaced by the action of the sharp iron point. It is bamboo everywhere. After the gas is reached and brought to the surface it is led off to the evaporating pans by more bamboo pipes, and made to do duty in turning the brine into salt crystals. But, for its bearing on this question of danger to come from the practice of tapping natural gas reservoirs, here is the chief point of interest in Mr. Denby's report.

During the Taiping rebellion, years ago, the rebels held possession of the country where these gas wells are situated, and they took off the cap that held the gas in confinement from one of the wells and set the column aflame. It has been burning ever since, and there is not talent enough among the Chinese engineers to extinguish the fire. But it is to be presumed that even the bamboo piping in the well remains unharmed, or the orifice must long since have been closed.

We need not go all the way to China, however, for examples. We have seen oil and gas wells enough in the United States and Pennsylvania had it been possible for the flame to penetrate below the surface. The Chinese incident, however, is not without interest from another point of view. There has been a theory that the gas wells must be soon exhausted; but here is a well that has been running with such force that the flame is inextinguishable during many years, and there is no evidence of decreasing pressure.

Official reports on the natural gas products of the United States are not very recent, the latest report, in its main features, coming down only to the close of the year 1885. It covers a period of less than two years, the discovery that natural gas could be found in sufficient quantities to make well driving profitable having been made in 1855. Yet at the end of the second year it was found that gas had displaced 6,453,000 tons of coal, estimated in value at \$10,000,000. This was about double the quantity displaced during the first year, 1857; and as the gas companies were rapidly extending their operations at the date of the report, it is to be presumed that the quantity displaced was still greater during the unrecorded years.

She knew Hwa Yoo Well. Miser (to wife)—I hear, madam, that you say witty things at my expense. Wife—Oh, no, dear; you couldn't afford it.

WELL PRESERVED MAMMOTHS.

One That Was Eaten About 80,000 Years After Burial.

It was not till the last year of the last century that the first mammoth was disinterred from the tundra, to the complete demolition of giants and antiquaries, and the profound delight of scientific inquirers. In 1799, at the very moment when a rash young man of the name of Bonaparte was upsetting the Directory and making himself incontinent into a first consul, the people of Siberia were quietly rejoicing in the rare and unexpected luxury of a warm summer. In the course of this unexpected climatic debauch a Tungusian fisherman in the Lena district went out one day hunting for mammoth tusks, and was surprised to find instead a whole mammoth sticking out of the bank of half thawed mud. Siberians stand rather in awe of mammoths; they are regarded as in some sort antediluvian, and therefore uncanny monsters, and the fisherman accordingly said nothing of his find to any man anywhere, but locked up the secret profoundly in his own bosom.

Next year, however, he went again stealthily to visit the suspicious creature, and the year after that he visited it a third time, and so on, until the mammoth was at last fairly thawed out, and fell on the sandbank by the shore of the Arctic ocean. Then the fisherman, seeing the monster was really dead, summoned up courage boldly to cut out the tusks, which he straightway sold, on business bent, for fifty roubles to a Russian merchant. As to the body itself, he thought no more in any way about that, for the skin and flesh being somewhat high, not to say unpleasant, were not in a condition to form remarkable commodities. However, he noticed that his monster was covered with long hair and thick wool, and that in general shape it roughly resembled his own unimpaired idea of an elephant. Two years later a wandering man of science passed the way on his road to China with Count Golovkin. Hearing that a mammoth had been unearthed, or, rather, noticed, near the mouth of the Lena, he turned aside from his main path to pay his respects in due form to the prehistoric monster. He found it, indeed, still recognizable, but quantum mutatus ab illo, a bare and mutilated elephantine corpse, with scarce a fragment of flesh clinging to the bones of the huge skeleton. The fisherman around had cut off the muscles from the body in great slices to feed his dogs, and the wolves and bears had feasted their fill on the frozen and unsavory meat of a forgotten antiquity.

There is something positively appalling in the idea of that strange beast, preserved so fresh for 80,000 years (on the most moderate computation), that when once more disinterred it was still fit for lupine food, and for the matter of that was very probably cooked and eaten in part by the unsophisticated Tungusians themselves in person. But though most of the flesh had disappeared the skeleton still remained almost intact, held together in places by the undecayed ligaments; the large eyes yet stared wildly from their capacious sockets, the brain was unimpaired within the heavy skull, one ear hung in a tuft of bristly hair, and as much of the skin had escaped destruction as ten men could carry away together. The skeleton was taken to St. Petersburg, and there set up in the museum of the imperial academy. It has frequently sat or stood for its portrait since to various artists, and its counterpart in black and white forms, in fact, the common mammoth of the ordinary woodcuts, almost all of which are taken from this earliest, the best and most perfect specimen. The only doubtful point about the beast is the tusks. They were purchased, as was supposed, from the Russian merchant who had bought them from their original discoverer; but whether he sold back the right pair or another set like them that fitted equally well, has never been quite satisfactorily determined.—Cornhill Magazine.

McLean, of the Enquirer.

As an evidence of his business sense I may say that he foresaw the tight times of 1873 nearly a year before the banks suspended specie payments and prepared for them by hoarding every dollar of currency that he could get hold of. He kept this currency in his boxes in the vaults of a safe deposit company, and when the suspension came he had \$173,000 in cash on hand. The advantages this gave him were great. On one occasion a prominent paper manufacturer came to him and wanted to sell him some paper at very low figures.

"What are your best rates for a million pounds?" said McLean. "A million pounds?" queried the manufacturer. "Let me see."

"Then after a mental calculation he answered: "Mr. McLean, as times are hard and money is tight and the amount you want is a large one, I will let you have it for six cents a pound."

"What time will you give me?" was the young man's next question. "Well, two or three months," was the reply. "Oh, that isn't enough," said McLean. "Money is scarce and hard to get. I must have six months at least."

This was finally acceded to and a contract was made immediately. Hardly was it signed when McLean turned to the manufacturer and asked: "Now, what discount will you allow me for cash on the delivery of the paper?" This took the other all aback, but the result was that McLean paid cash for his paper as it was delivered to him and got it for five and one-half cents a pound, and this at a time when some of his business rivals had to pay over a cent a pound more for the same grade of paper, besides the interest on the money they had to borrow to settle their bills.—New York Cor. Philadelphia Times.

American Love for Loris.

As long as Americans have a national characteristic left from the wreck of Anglomania, they will love a loris, even as Tom did. The visiting lord will always be their golden calf—sometimes not even golden. American girls will marry him, and, of course, if he is a nice, jolly, talkative fellow, as he generally is, every one will be pleased. But it doesn't always stop there—American girls will still marry him if he is a common ruffian, as much of an outlaw in his own country as though he had forged a check or robbed a church. There's the trouble; we exercise no discrimination. For example, there was Sir Richard Sutton and the Duke of Marlborough and Sutherland. Sir Richard was a gentleman in the fullest sense of the word, and by his stately bonhomie and gracious courtesy amply atoned for Mr. Ashbury's unpleasantness over the Cambria and Livonia races years ago. And yet Sir Richard was not as much sought after, was not as highly honored by fete and festival, as either of the dukes. Surely some one should discriminate between such men.

The creed of society in these matters is very simple; the higher the title the better the man—that's all.—New York Cor. Times-Democrat.

She knew Hwa Yoo Well. Miser (to wife)—I hear, madam, that you say witty things at my expense. Wife—Oh, no, dear; you couldn't afford it.

THE "REPTILE FUND."

SECRET SERVICE FUNDS AT PRINCE BISMARCK'S DISPOSAL.

Methods by Which the Iron Chancellor Controls the German Press—Collection of Personal Information—Woes Which Betide an Unfortunate Journal.

The reptile fund—so called because of Prince Bismarck's own phrase—consists of the confiscated fortune of the king of Hanover, together with an unknown grant from the war indemnity. Speaking of the attacks made upon the government by the press, the chancellor exclaimed on a memorable occasion that as his administration was so exposed to malignant misrepresentations at the hands of its adversaries, he did not think it tolerable that he should be left unarmed against so powerful and so unscrupulous a foe. "I must have means," he said, "with which to hunt those reptiles to their holes and destroy them there." Hence the so-called reptile fund, which is simply an indefinite amount of secret service money at the disposal of Prince Bismarck for controlling the press.

With its aid he is said to have organized a news service for the benefit of the German government, the like of which exists nowhere outside of the pages of the French novels which describe the spy system of Fouche at its most sturdy. He has also the same damme of Prince Bismarck, who has at his command a disciplined host of confidential reporters, who enable him to follow untraced the movements of all his adversaries. The great chancellor never neglects any foe, no matter how insignificant.

At the chancellery of the secret intelligence bureau at Berlin, under Herr Holstein, are kept the dossiers of every man or woman whom from time to time it thinks necessary to Prince Bismarck to watch with a view to ulterior developments. The minuteness of the information thus stored up for future use is very extraordinary, and suggests many uncomfortable reflections. A friend of mine resident in Germany once had an opportunity of seeing his own dossier. There in he found set down all particulars of himself and his family and his relations. A list was given of all the people whom he was in the habit of receiving, and a detailed report of all the correspondents to whom he was in the habit of writing. To this man, it was written, he sends letters every week, to the other every day, to a third he writes sometimes twice a week, and then ceases to write for a week or a month.

But the possession of an indefinite amount of secret service money for purposes of corruption, and the accumulation from all the unseen channels of ubiquitous secret police of a vast reservoir of information for use if required, are by no means the only instruments by which Prince Bismarck keeps his press in good order. "How is it done?" exclaimed a witty victim of the chancellor's surveillance. "It is very simple. Some day the editors of Berlin are summoned to the office of the oracle. They are told that the government is in possession of such and such an important piece of information which is communicated to them, not for publication, but in confidence, in order that when the opportune moment arrives they may be well informed. A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse, and before very long one or other of the editors discovers in some mysterious way that the time has arrived when the cat must be let out of the bag. He lets it out accordingly, and all his brethren follow suit and the news, true or false, is launched in due form."

"But what," I asked, "if an editor refuses to take the hint and obstinately abstains from circulating the official communication?" "Then," was the reply, "it does not go well with the editor. Some day the venders of quack medicines for the cure of unmentionable diseases. "How, in the name of wonder, can that be?" "It is very simple. In the fatherland the government charges itself with watchful solicitude for the morals of its subjects. But as even Homer sometimes nods, so the most vigilant administrations sometimes fail to discover that the columns of German newspapers are defiled by the insertion of advertisements of immoral pills or by the address of unclean doctors. When, however, any newspaper continuously opposes itself to the will of the authorities, the custodian of public morals puts on his spectacles, and we betide the unfortunate journal if in the obscurest corner of his badly printed page there should be discovered lurking an allusion to the objectionable pill or the disreputable physician. The administrator is down upon him at once, and punishment is heaped on punishment until the editor consents to dance to the piping of power. Then the custodian of public morals once more slumbers and sleeps, and the quack advertises his pills in peace."

Add to this that press prosecutions for press offenses are as plentiful as blackberries, that editors are sent to jail as felons for what would be regarded in England as perfectly justifiable criticism upon the chancellor, that half the cities in Germany are under a state of siege, and you can form some idea of the facilities which Prince Bismarck possesses for manipulating the journals of the fatherland.—Pall Mall Gazette.

American Students of Music.

Professor Joachim, of the Royal Academy of Music, chatted amiably about American students. "They have," he said, "a mistaken idea of the tasks which are before them. Nearly all of them expect to become finished artists in a twelve-month or so, whereas it takes years of training to develop even the greatest talent. I like the energy with which they go to work, and I do not find, as it has often been said, that this enthusiasm soon wears itself out. I find ability to work hard and to work steadily and persistently nearly always go hand in hand with what they usually arrive two or three years before their time. There are admirable instructors in the United States, and it would be better for the students to take advantage of the home opportunities to their fullest extent before coming here, for then they would escape the drudgery, and (with a struggle) we would escape it, too."—Blackly Hall's Berlin Letter.

Japanese Spinning Machines.

The British consul at Ningpo calls the attention of British manufacturers to spinning machines used in his district that were imported from Japan, and which he thinks will eventually be adopted in cotton producing countries. The advantages claimed for them as compared with the method of spinning used in America are that the staple is less injured and that the seeds are better cleaned. This is attained by drawing the cotton between straight steel edges or knives, instead

NATURE'S FRIENDSHIPS.

THE STATE OF WAR NOT SO BAD AS WE IMAGINE.

Animals' Dread of Human Beings—Our Slaughter of Birds and Beasts—Grief of Pets at Losing a Friend—Natural Antipathies.

There is a deal of love killed out or prevented from manifesting itself. This is true not only among human beings, but between men and animals and birds, and even insects. The state of war that is in existence in nature is not by half as bad as we imagine. The worst half is caused by our own selfish interference. On wild islands, when first visited by men, it is always reported that fowls and birds are so tame that they permit the approach of any one without the idea of fear. But this they soon lose. The same is true of seals and animals that have not been hunted. But there grows up rapidly a dread of man, so that the scene of a human being to an antelope, elk or buffalo is most abhorrent. This becomes an inherited trait. Man, after all, is the great destroyer that is dreaded in all the realms of nature. The feline tribes rank next to him, together with wolves, hawks and serpents. This is not a pleasant fact to consider, but it is sadder of all that it is a fact.

Nor does this begin to tell the full truth. It is not wild animals alone that dread us, but as a rule there is little love for us among tame animals, the dog excepted. The cat has an occasional friend, but is compelled for the most part to live on the defensive. Some races, like the Bedouins, live on terms of familiarity with their horses and camels. These exceptions show the possible friendship. In a Quaker barony, it has been seen such a rule of love that every animal was a conscious friend. It is only because of our brutality, or indifference, that our animals are not our lovers. Cows are by no means "board faced creatures" when gently handled. Trained up as pets, they become affectionate to a degree surpassed only by dogs. I have owned a horse that never allowed me to approach without placing her head affectionately across my shoulder or her nose in my bosom.

I cannot think without anger of the slaughter of birds and animals for no possible reason but sport. The birds would "take to us" freely, if they dared; and, as it is, a few have managed to break down prejudice. The friendship between mankind and robins I can hardly comprehend, for this bird is far less valuable than some others, and is also less beautiful. A writer in Vick's Magazine relates how she formed a friendship with a humming bird. "I have had one brief little friendship with a bird during the present summer which seems like a tender dream, a fleeting glimpse into an unknown land, a peep into fairyland." She had come upon a tiny young humming bird that had been chilled by a cool night and sitting him up, and warmed and fed him. He grew so tame that "when he was hungry he would fly down to me from top of a picture, and alighting on a twig in my fingers, would sit and sip his sugar and water from a teaspoon or the end of my finger. These drops would satisfy him," and then off he flew. "He delighted to be held over a large spoonful of soft water, and dip in his beak and splash water over his little head."

There is no reason why this gentle accord may not be established on all hands. Prisoners, as we know, have formed curious attachments for crickets and spiders, and thus saved themselves from loss of reason during solitary confinement. Nor, even in such cases, is the friendship altogether on one side. Foxes, dogs, cats, horses, have been known to die for grief over the death of a special friend. I have seen manifestations of intense grief in several cases. The cat is especially peculiarly strong attachments. I have known one to be inconsolable for many weeks after the departure of a boy to whom he specially devoted himself.

Natural antipathies form the other side of this question and the illustrations are all about. A stray dog came to my place last summer. He laid himself flat on his belly as I approached, only moving his eyes with the light of his natural antipathy. I drew near, not a motion, but he drew still flatter to the soil. He was offering his services. Would I accept him? He was a beautiful cross of shepherd and hunter. I said, "Yes, you may stay." He knew in a moment the purpose of my words. Leaping up, he came with eyes full of gladness and took my scent, and at once was a member of my household. But the friendship was ever first of all for myself.

Now came the question of cat and dog, for I had a splendid cat that had had no dogs about to annoy him. Here was the natural antagonism of the feline and canine races. But "Shep" understood perfectly that he was an adopted resident, and must not crowd his acquaintance. They could not become quite friends, but learned to tolerate each other. What is this natural antipathy? Traced far enough back, the ancestry of the felines and canines come out of a common stock. But these terrible clawing creatures have been outlaws from time immemorial. To bite is allowable in the animal code; but to scratch, that is an innovation and indecent. We have codes that allow bullies to pound and kick, but they must not scratch. It is easy to imagine how the first that took to using their nails were driven out of the tribe. I believe the genuine ancestry to be canine; the feline is a spurious offshoot.

There are intense hatreds, as we well know, between birds. Not one of them will form an alliance with the English sparrow. So far as I have observed the blackbird has no friends and does not care for any. He works in troops, steals in companies, and has his bill against all other sorts of birds, and is detested in turn. An owl is a lonely creature, only that it is said occasionally to make a pet of a snake instead of eating it, which I doubt. The friendship is probably like that of prairie dogs and rattlesnakes—an invasion of snakes that can not be prevented. The owl may not be able to digest some of his saurian acquaintances. As a rule there is some one, or two, members of a household, that had better let the domestic cat alone—sometimes also the dog or dogs. Why these are not liked by the animals I do not know, unless it be something in the scent. Horses have strong antipathies to certain grooms, indeed, I should judge, at least in part, on smell.—"E. P. P." in Globe Democrat.

A New Experience.

Mistress (pumping)—Hold the pitcher under the spout, Bridget! Biddy O'Galway (under training)—Oh, mother uv Moses! Lookit! Sich a ting! All yez have to do is to be shakin' that stick, an' yez get hold o' one ind o' the wather, an' jist pull out a rope of it. Sich a ting. Sure, ma'am, the only kind of pump we have in Ireland is a bucket.—Woman.

As Long as Possible.

"See here, my friend," said a farmer to a tramp, "you've been lyin' in the shade of that fence for over thirteen hours. Ain't it best time to move on?" "If you say so," replied the tramp, "I'll move on." "I'll move on," replied the tramp, "I'll move on."

The Plattsmouth Herald

Is enjoying a Boom in both its

DAILY AND WEEKLY

EDITIONS.

The Year 1888

Will be one during which the subjects of national interest and importance will be strongly agitated and the election of a President will take place. The people of Cass County who would like to learn of

Political, Commercial and Social Transactions

of this year and would keep apace with the times should

SUBSCRIBE

FOR EITHER THE

Daily or Weekly Herald.

Now while we have the subject before the people we will venture to speak of our

JOB DEPARTMENT.

Which is first-class in all respects and from which our job printers are turning out much satisfactory work.

PLATTSMOUTH, :: NEBRASKA.