

000. Eight thousand seven hundred tons were mined here in 1895, at a selling price of \$368,000. Two years ago \$1,000,000 worth was exported, or nearly forty thousand tons, and this industry is still growing.

IT IS STATED THAT CANADA IS PRODUCING about eighty-five per cent of all asbestos mined. The United States sends about 5 per cent of the total amount of asbestos to the market, and the countries of Europe supply the other 10 per cent. The New York Herald writer concludes as follows: "Asbestos for building purposes is worked into forms like plaster of paris. Smooth as glass, hard as marble, and withal beautiful to look upon, there is apparently no reason, outside of the increased cost, why all buildings of public resort should not be constructed of this material within and without. Dampened asbestos may be handled like felt and placed around pillars, cornices, staircases, etc., rendering them fireproof as soon as the mass hardens. The iron pillars supporting balconies in playhouses and stories in skyscrapers become, in case of fire, by their very nature sources of grave danger, if uncovered by asbestos. For the heat is liable to render them red hot, bend and eventually melt them, so that one story after the other tumbles in. Asbestos can and does prevent this tremendous danger, as fire cannot penetrate to the iron parts, and consequently their usefulness as pillars and bracers remain unimpaired."

IT IS BELIEVED THAT BEFORE VERY LONG the famous Dead Sea will be exploited for industrial purposes. French engineers are at work on three different projects with this purpose in view. According to the Boston Transcript, the level of the Dead Sea being more than 1,300 feet below that of the Mediterranean and Red seas, it is thought by connecting either of these two seas by means of a canal with the Red Sea a stream of water would flow with a velocity calculated to produce some 52,000 horse power. There is no danger, it is asserted, of an overflowing of the Dead Sea, for the waters there evaporate at so great a rate (6,000,000 tons a day) that the incoming waters would make no appreciable difference in the level. One project is to start the canal from the Bay of Acre, lead it southward past Mount Tabor, and let it join, at Balsan, the waters of the Jordan. Another plan is to build the canal along the railway line from Jaffa to Jerusalem. But this would mean blasting a tunnel of some thirty-seven miles through the mountains of Old Judea. The third project, the cheapest, proposes to start at Akaba, in the Red Sea, and pass through the Desert of Wady-el-Jebel. Having obtained power in this manner it is thought many industrial works would be carried on.

FOR MANY YEARS THE SPOT WHERE LORD Nelson, England's famous naval hero, died has been pointed out to tourists and others who made pilgrimages to the place. Now it has been discovered that the spot shown was not in reality the exact place of Lord Nelson's death, and this discovery has caused a great stir among English citizens. The St. James Gazette of London thinks there is occasion to rebuke the fussing ones, which it proceeds to do in this wise: "Why all this pother about the exact spot where Nelson died? To begin with, none now alive witnessed that sad event, and rumor is not to be relied upon. Secondly, there being no direct evidence, why disturb the equanimity of a million pilgrims scattered over all the world? Their devoted feet have hallowed—or at least hollowed—the spot which has for years been confidently pointed out by expectant cicerones as the only true and original one. Let us then leave it at that. The pilgrim spirit is of more importance than the exact location of Mecca. And the eye of faith can see what it chooses. What though John the Baptist seem as many-headed as the hydra? Shown his real and original head, as served up to Herodias' daughter, credulity will not remember having seen the same head elsewhere. There is a story of a skeptic who, on being shown the sword with which Balaam killed his ass, objected that the prophet had no sword, and that, according to Biblical authority, he only wished for a sword. 'Well,' said the faithful believer, 'then this is the sword he wished for.' The faith of the showman is surely more powerful than the skepticism of the tourist. Down with iconoclasm, and up with our idols!"

ACETYLENE GAS USED FOR ILLUMINATING purposes, was discovered by an accident, according to Harper's Weekly. That publication tells the story in this way: "Willson, a

scientific experimenter, believed that nearly all metallic oxides could be reduced to a metallic state by heating them to an extremely high temperature by the voltaic arc in the presence of free carbon. Aluminum had been successfully reduced in this way. Mr. Willson wished to obtain metallic calcium. He therefore mixed a quantity of quicklime with pulverized coke, and brought the mixture to a high temperature by the action of the voltaic arc. He expected to obtain a white metal, but instead he appeared to produce nothing but slag. This was thrown into the yard, and one day at noon, while the boys were having their luncheon, they picked up these bits of slag and threw them at each other. One piece fell into a pail of water and produced a bubbling effect and a strong odor. This attracted Mr. Willson's attention, and upon investigation he found the strong smelling gas was extremely inflammable. Further investigation revealed that it was pure acetylene gas."

THE WHITE PINE IS DISAPPEARING FROM the northern part of the United States, according to recent statistics gathered on the subject. It seems that the cut of this wood for 1903 was smaller than for any year since 1878, and but little more than half that of 1890, when 8,600,000,000 feet were cut. The Duluth (Minn.) correspondent for the New York Times says that in 1903 only 4,791,852,000 feet of white pine were cut, and that the figures show conclusively that the northern pine supply has declined beyond a possibility of ever reaching high-water mark again, and that a continuous decrease must come until the industry is wiped out. The only two districts that show no decline for the year in the whole northern pine region are the Duluth and Upper Mississippi river districts. Duluth has made more lumber than ever before, and more than any other section ever made, with a cut for the year of 944,000,000 feet. This far exceeds the best record ever made by Saginaw, when that was the center of the white pine industry of the United States. The white pine cut of Michigan is almost at an end. Saginaw, which produced more than eight hundred million feet in 1893, the past season made only about 7 per cent as much. In a few years, probably less than ten, the Chicago district will be reduced to a few million feet of odds and ends, scrapings of the once vast forest.

AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY WAS RECENTLY made in the form of a new medicinal clay. A dispatch to the St. Louis Republic, under date of Pueblo, Colo., says that H. H. Bourne is the discoverer of this new clay, and "that an analysis of the material has been made with the result of showing a small per cent of silicate of aluminum. It is claimed that no mineral known to scientists is purer than this. It is nine times finer than the finest starch. It is said to be the purest mineral to be found, with the exception of diamonds. J. Pierpont Morgan has a piece of the silicate of aluminum about the size of the end of a small finger, which is worth more than \$20,000, according to statements made by chemists. Mr. Bourne states that he can drink four gallons of water now without any discomfort after using the new material as a medicine, and that his weight has increased as well as his strength, and though he is 66 years old, he feels better than when he was 40. He claims that he can cure with this clay any case of typhoid fever or diseases of that kind within an hour."

CHICAGO MILLIONAIRES ARE PLANNING A philanthropic work on a great scale. This work refers to the colonization of the slum population of the great American cities upon farms. According to the Chicago correspondent for the New York Herald, the Field and Work Shop society is the corporation which has been formed to work out the details. E. T. Rosenthal, who is responsible for the Industrial Art League, has been the principal sponsor and creator. The organization will be national. Fifty thousand dollars will be spent in organizing. The first move of the new society will be to get land from the United States government. That is the crux of the scheme. The land under the operation of the homestead act can be secured at a nominal price. The society will take care of the settlers until they can support themselves. The scheme is to be financed by the issuance of bonds against the lands secured by settlement. Millionaires are expected to take the bonds in \$50,000 lots.

LONDON CABLEGRAMS REPORT THAT Mrs. Maybrick has been released from prison by the British authorities. The report has not been verified although it is admitted that Mrs.

Maybrick has been removed from the prison in which she was so long confined, and newspaper correspondents seem to be unable to locate the famous prisoner. The impression seems to be that if Mrs. Maybrick has not already been released the British authorities are laying plans to that end. A writer in the Des Moines Register and Leader says: "Should the report of Mrs. Maybrick's release from prison be definitely confirmed much of the credit of her release will be due Ambassador Choate. Since his first arrival at London as this country's representative he has striven earnestly for the woman's freedom, and his efforts now seem to be crowned with success. In March of last year the British home office definitely announced that Mrs. Maybrick would be released in 1904, but even then Ambassador Choate did not relinquish persistent efforts. That her release has come thus early in the year, if she is released, will be a splendid tribute to Mr. Choate's persistency, legal perseverance and acumen and popularity with British officials."

MRS MAYBRICK FOR YEARS HAS BEEN the most famous woman prisoner in any jail. The Register and Leader writer says: "She would have served fifteen years had she remained in prison until next July. There has always been much doubt as to her guilt, and also a general belief that even if she did murder her husband she was forced into the act by his abuses of her and should not have been convicted of so heinous a crime. Maybrick died from arsenic poisoning, he being addicted to the use of the drug. It was shown that a short time before he became sick he had purchased 150 grains of poison. The trial became largely a battle of experts and was bitterly fought. Mrs. Maybrick was defended by Sir Charles Russell, who afterward became lord chief justice of England. The presiding judge was Justice Fitzjames Stephen. Not long after the trial the latter went insane and died in a madhouse. After the trial was concluded the jury retired and was out thirty-eight minutes and returned with a verdict of murder in the first degree. Mrs. Maybrick was sentenced and the scaffold for her execution was erected close to her cell in the prison. At that time came a reversal of popular feeling, which had been strong against her, which was quick enough and strong enough that the death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment."

THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK city has united with the health department of Chicago in the war against the anti-toxin trust. Health Commissioner Darlington of New York city has made investigation and as a result has announced the existence of an anti-toxin trust. Commissioner Darlington offers to sell such surplus as his department may have on hand to the Chicago department of health and such other departments in various cities as may need assistance. Commissioner Darlington has issued an interesting statement with respect to his investigations and he gives the details of an interview he had with representatives of the three chief manufacturers of anti-toxin.

ACCORDING TO COMMISSIONER DARLINGTON the representatives of the anti-toxin combine presented copies of letters sent to him by the three firms. These letters deny that there has been any combination of anti-toxin manufacturers as to prices. Referring to the statement made by this trust representative the New York Herald says: "He told Dr. Darlington that all three of these firms had assured him that there was no combination, but when requested to do so he seemed unable to state definitely upon what he based his belief other than the statements of the manufacturers. 'Even supposing that there was a combination,' the agent asked 'what would you do?'" "Mr. Darlington replied," says the statement, "I will double, treble or quadruple our output. I will sell it from here to San Francisco. You tell me that it is against the law. You may be right; but I tell you that there is a higher law, which is above any on the statute books, and that is the necessities of the poor. The life of one child is worth more than all the profits of your manufacturers. The agents of the manufacturers tell me there is no combination. How do they explain the fact that when bids were received in Chicago on January 15 all three bidders doubled their prices and were identical to a cent in their figures? No sane man could believe that there had not been collusion and combination between bidders. You can call it what you like, but that is a trust, and an evil one, for it is going to double the price of an article which to the consumer is literally a matter of life or death."