

Vast Production of Iron and Steel Ore.

The remarkable growth of the iron industry of the United States during the ten years from 1870 to 1880 is shown by the statistics of our iron and steel production collected for the tenth census by Mr. James M. Swank. Exactly how great that growth was is shown in the following table:

| | 1870. | 1880. |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Number of establishments..... | 1,065 | 1,878 |
| Capital invested..... | \$23,971,884 | \$121,772,974 |
| Value of materials..... | \$191,271,150 | \$13,324,132 |
| Value of products, tons..... | \$29,637,685 | \$207,246,620 |
| Weight of products, tons..... | 7,265,140 | 3,655,215 |
| Hands employed..... | 140,978 | 77,559 |
| Paid in wages..... | \$55,476,785 | \$40,514,941 |

It will be observed that, while the weight of the products was nearly twice as much in 1880 as in 1870, their value increased only about 43 per cent., and the value of the raw materials used was only 41 per cent. greater. This disproportion is easily explained. The prices of iron were high in 1870, owing to the premium on gold, which averaged 15 per cent. throughout the year, and in 1880 they were lower. Moreover, during the decade there was a wonderful development, both mechanical and scientific, of our iron and steel industries. The consequence was that the great increase of production was rendered possible.

The growth of the iron business has been most marked during the last quarter of a century. Indeed, previous to 1860 we produced only a small, almost insignificant, quantity of pig iron and cast iron. Fifty years ago our blast-furnace practice had scarcely progressed since the colonial days. In 1831 it was deemed a great thing for a single furnace to turn out 1,100 tons of pig iron in a year. In 1880 we had several furnaces which could each make 1,000 tons a month, and in 1881 we had one whose production was 224 tons a day, 1,357 a week, and 5,598 a month. In 1860 we produced of pig iron and cast iron 821,223 gross tons, and in 1880 more than fourfold that quantity, or 3,835,191 gross tons. The production for 1881 was about 4,500,000 tons.

But the growth of our steel production is even more remarkable. Fifty years ago we did not make one pound of crucible steel of the best quality, and very little steel of any kind was manufactured. In 1880 our production of Bessemer steel and Bessemer steel rails was greater than that of Great Britain even. We turned out 1,247,335 gross tons of steel of all kind, 64,664 tons being crucible steel. It was not until 1841 that we began to roll any other kind of rails than strap rails. In 1880 we rolled 1,305,212 gross tons of rails, nearly two-thirds of them being steel, and almost the whole of them T rails.

Of course, European countries have the advantage of us in the matter of wages. Their furnaces may also be nearer the raw materials than ours. But so far as concerns the processes of manufacture employed, Mr. Swank has no doubt of our superiority. "Our blast-furnace practice is the best in the world. Our Bessemer-steel practice is also the best in the world. We produce much more Bessemer steel and roll more Bessemer-steel rails in a given time, by a given amount of machinery, technically termed a 'plant,' than any of our European rivals."—*New York Sun.*

A Chinese Fishing Village in California.

It was close on the edge of the water, where a little inlet rounded in, below high hills. As we drew near it, the odor of fish came up over the hills, like a smell from something cooking in a vast caldron. The fences, the rocks, the ground—all were covered with shining little fishes spread out to dry; those on the ground being laid on frames of wooden slats. There was only one narrow lane running through the village, and hardly room on that to step between the frames of drying fish. On the roofs of the hovels even poles were set up, and stretched from corner to corner; and on them long lines of fish fluttered in the air, like clothes hung out to dry. Chinamen were running about emptying big baskets of fish; other Chinamen were spreading them, turning them, raking them apart, gathering up the dry ones and packing them into baskets. The place fairly swarmed with laborers and their implements; but all the workers kept steadily on, as regardless of our presence as though they had been ants on an ant-hill. Every man, woman and child was hard at work; children that were too small for anything else had babies strapped on their backs, and were carrying them about. Little girls, not more than 8 or 10 years old, were at work industriously cleaning the fish, to prepare them for drying. This was a disagreeable sight; it was done in open sheds, where the floor was black and dripping wet with water and the slimy offal of the fish. Here the women sat on high stools, in a squatting posture, with their feet curled up under them, cutting and slashing, stripping the fish, and dropping them into the baskets with as swift a motion as if they were shelling peas. They had the fingers of the left hand rolled up thickly in black rags to protect them against a chance slip of the sharp knife. They chatted and laughed, as if they were engaged in the most agreeable occupation in the world. There did not seem to be an idle pair of hands in the village. Old men were mending nets, old women putting bait on hooks. The only unemployed creature we saw was one small baby.

It would not be possible to give any idea of the way in which the houses, sheds, boats, barrels, poles, nets, baskets, scaffolding and lumber of all sorts were huddled together on the narrow alley not wide enough for two wagons to drive abreast. There was not a foot of open ground. Looking down from the hill on the roofs of the houses one would think they all belonged to a

single set of walls, rooted at different heights and angles. It was a squalid and filthy spot; it would seem impossible for human beings to breathe such air, and sleep in such dark, unventilated hovels for any length of time, without being made ill. Yet there are in this little village nearly 200 people, many of whom have lived there for thirty years in good health. They are divided into three companies, each company having its leader, who pays wages to the men and women, and has the charge of selling and sending away the fish.—*H. H., in St. Nicholas.*

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