THE EVENING NEWS.

Friday, - - - - December 16, 1870.

SUGAR.

Some Interesting Saccharine Facts.

Sugar is of modern use only. The ancients were unacquainted with it as an article of commerce or of common use. What a revolution in our household affairs it would occasion to strike sugar from the list of dietary articles! It is a necessity—not a luxury. Within the last fourhundred years it has grown from an article of curiosity or luxury to be one of the great staples of commerce. It enters into every department of domestic economy. Humboldt says that in China it was known and used in ancient times; but if known at all in Western Asia or Europe till within the last few centuries, it was only as travelers brought it as a remembrance of foreign climes and distant travel. There is some foundation for the idea that it was not entirely unknown to the ancient Greeks. We find in the classics mention made of honey that bees did not make, honey from reeds, the sugar cane being a reed. From these expressions it is thought that sugar is meant, as all sweet articles were included in the term honey in early days. Pliny says there is a kind of honey from reeds which is like a gum, and is used as a medicine. Some allusions in the Bible seem to refer to sugar, and not to honey. In later times it is said that the crusaders found sweet honied canes growing in the meadows of Tripoli, that they sucked these canes, and were delighted with the operation; that these canes were cultivated with great care, and when ripe were pounded in mortars, and the juice was strained and dried to a soli', like salt, that mixed with bread it was more pleasant than honey. In 1420 the Portuguese brought the cane to Spain, Madeira, and the Canaries, and thence it was carried to the West Indies and Brazil. In these countries it found the conditions for its rapid development, and the world was soon furnished with the products of these countries; so that sugar assumed a place among the chief articles of commerce.

The constitution of sugar, in the proportion of the elements, is carbon (charcoal) and water. An atom of water, more or less, changes entirely the character of the sugar; and not only that, but also changes it into entirely different substances. Gum, starch and wood, differ in no respect in comparison, but only in the amount of water they contain; and this difference is within very narrow limits, and in some of them there is no difference at all. There is no fact in nature that calls forth our astonishment or exhibits the wisdom and direct impress of the Deity so strikingly as finding innumerable substances identical in composition, but altogether dissimilar in properties. We see the fiat of the Almighty stamping properties with no change of matter.

The term sugar has a much more extended meaning in science than in commerce. In the former it includes all those organic compounds, mostly vegetable, having a sweet taste, soluble in water, and neutral in relation to vegetable colors; that is, they are neither acid nor alkaline. Under this definition are included honey, liquorices, manna, etc Of these we shall not at present speak. There are three kinds of sugar, closely related, and important in an economical point of view, and present some of the most wonderful reactions in their production, all tending to our interest and happiness. —[*Economist.*

STRANGE PHENOMENON.—The inhabitants of the Basket Station, on the Delaware division of the Erie railway, were treated to a first-class sensation. About two miles north of the place, three acres of land, heavily timbered with hemlock, occupying an elevated position, suddenly sank below the surface, disappearing in a manner similar to a load of dirt when the bottom is let out of the wagon. There was no apparent cause, but it certainly has sunk to a depth of about forty feet, leaving the trees just visible above the surface. The sinking was accompanied by a loud crash, which died away in a dull rumble, heard at considerable distance. The trees are standing in their natural positions, having evidently experienced no particular injury in their descent.

It is usual when such freaks of nature occur, for the sunken earth to be immediately submerged by volumes of water, but in this instance no such phenomenon attends. The soil is of a clayey nature, the sides of the chasm formed by the sinking present a smooth and even appearance, as if a huge spade had been thrust down, and the earth thrown out.

The people at the Basket, and from the surrounding country for miles, visited the scene of the phenomenon on Sunday, and visited it with awe and consternation. They don't like to be close to where the bottom seems to be dropping out of terrestial things.—[Port Jervis (N. Y.) *Gazette.*

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d271tf

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GOLDEN CHARIOT MINING COMPANY, Silver City, Idaho, Oct. 18, 1870.

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DEAR SIRS:—In reply to your late favor, I give you the following result of my working here. The cost of drilling, which cost under the old system of mining here $40 per foot with the single hand system of working and Giant Powder I have reduced to a cost of $12 per foot, and when under the old system but one foot per day was driven, my men are easily making one and a half feet.

Under the old system mining (5 feet square) cost $35 per foot, same is now costing me $14.75 per foot, with the same difference in time as shown in drilling

Under the old system, our mine could never be made to yield exceeding 400 tons per month; with Giant Powder and single hand drilling, I am now furnishing monthly 1,600 tons at a reduced cost of at least 33½ per cent less per ton than under the old system.

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Yours, respectfully,

JOHN F. CASSELS,

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d6 1m H. B. CLAWSON, Supt.

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