

Upwards of 500 tons have now been delivered.

Large stocks are also now on hand of the Manila yarn with which the iron wire is to be surrounded, and of the tarred jute which forms the padding for the protection of the gutta percha core from injury from the compression of the external armor of the Manila covered wire.

The deliveries of core from the gutta percha works to the East Greenwich covering works commenced on the 21st of July, but a good deal of delay has necessarily taken place in commencing the last stage of the manufacture (that of covering the core with its external protection) owing to the fact that with a determination to omit no improvements that science and experience have suggested, the contractors have nearly remodeled the works at that place. All the covering machines have been taken down and reconstructed, and every appliance added which forethought and present knowledge can think of for the security and preservation and testing of the new cable. Eight immense iron tanks have been constructed, one for each machine, so that the cable passes direct out of the manufactory into water, and twenty-four other iron tanks have been provided for the preservation of the core during its progress through the factory into the covering machines, with special arrangements for applying a severe and special test to every joint before it passes into the covering machine.

Owing to the length of time which these various important matters have occupied, it was not until Thursday, the 1st of September, that a machine for turning out the completed cable was started. Since then three other machines have got into full work, and a fifth machine will start before the end of the present week. The other three will afterwards be speedily set going, and the cable will then be completed at the rate of about 80 miles per week. At present a little over 100 miles have been finished.

The Great Eastern steamship left Liverpool on the service of this company on Saturday, the 11th of July, and arrived at Sheerness on Wednesday, July 13th, where she now continues. The contractors commenced on the 19th of September to remove the floor of her upper deck—on the deck below which the iron tanks will have to be erected for storing the cable in water.

These tanks will be three in number and dimensions about fifty nine feet diameter by twenty in depth. The iron plates for them are being rolled and punched by Messrs. Westwood & Baillie, who rivet them together on board, and who are bound to complete them not later than the middle of December. The first tank is to be ready by the middle of November.

The government have appropriated two ships to the service of transporting the cable as it is made—from the works at Marden Wharf to the Great Eastern at Sheerness. These also will each contain three iron tanks, so that the cable will never be out of water for more than a few moments at a time from its first commencement at the gutta percha works to its submersion in thesea. The contractors have in stock the tanks for these ships, and they will therefore only require putting together.

I am happy to tell you that, as regards the portion of completed cable, nothing can be more satisfactory than the manner in which it can be coiled and handled. It was thought by some that the advantage gained by the great strength of the homogeneous iron would be counteracted by its supposed hardness and springiness; but, as regards the portion at present turned out, I can testify that this supposition is quite a fallacy. It lies as dead as a hemp rope in the coil, and has no spring whatever in it.

I trust the above account will be satisfactory to yourself and our directors and other friends in America. They may be assured of one thing, without any doubt, namely, that we shall have a better cable than has ever hitherto been produced; and, in the opinion of those who should be most competent to judge may be relied on, the Great Eastern is the proper ship for the work.

In the belief, therefore, that every known precaution and appliance in securing success has been and will be made available, we may more safely commit the great and hoped for final result of our noble undertaking to the protection of that mightiest arm, to which even the stormiest waves of the Atlantic are obedient.

I am, my dear sir, very truly yours,
GEO. SAWARD.

Secretary and General Superintendent.

CYRUS W. FIELD, ESQ.

REMARKABLE DISCOVERY IN ENGLAND.

The Liverpool (England) *Mercury*, contains a letter from Mr. J. P. Ashton, agent of the contractors for the iron work of the bridge crossing the Mersey, at Runcorn, Lancashire, giving an account of the discovery of a human body in a most excellent state of preservation, which must have lain in the rest of death for 1,500 years. We add the account given by Mr. Ashton:

The discovery was made in the following manner: On the 27th of August, while sinking one of our caissons, an obstacle was met with which defied the pressure exercised by our sinking apparatus. Divers were sent down, who, on removing a quantity of sand from about the base of the caisson, reported the obstacle to be a large log of wood. By the help of a strong crane, and after removing the pressure from the caisson, we were enabled to draw it up to the staging, and found it to be not a log of wood, as the drivers, misled by its general attrited state, had reported, but a large coffin-shaped box of great strength, measuring about eight feet by three feet. The wood had become impregnated with oxide of iron, from the red sandstone, which had made it as hard as iron itself, so that it was with the greatest difficulty that we were enabled to prise open the lid. The inside which was roughly hewn to the shape of a human body, with a large additional space at the head, was lined with a greyish, bituminous substance, and contained the body of a man in a most wonderful state of preservation. It is attired in the dress of a wealthy Roman citizen, the tunic and toga both white, embroidered with purple and gold threads, the toga fastened with a handsome gilt fibula. The straps of the buskins are studded with golden bosses. Attached to the girdle are a tablet and a golden-hilted stylus. The *tout ensemble*, in fact, while not glaring, is rich and tasteful. The body, though in civil dress, appears to be that of a legionary officer, as a large military cloak is swathed round it, and by its side are a short sword (the famous Roman "gladium") with its belt, a javelin and a vinea, such as centurions used to discipline among the men. A fine onyx signet ring, bearing the letters S. P. Q. R., and a figure of a wolf, is on the finger. This I conjecture to be a symbol of authority delegated by the Roman Senate, or the then reigning emperor, to the bearer. The sword and belt also bear the initials S. P. Q. R. The body has been embalmed in so skillful a manner as to preserve, even after this lapse of time, the features totally distinct, but is excessively fragile, crumbling at a touch; in fact, it has only been preserved from total destruction by a mantle, and by a quantity of a cryptogamic plant allied to a common equisetum, which is packed round it, keeping it steady and immovable in the coffin. I forbear giving a more detailed account, and will proceed to mention briefly the contents of the space above the head of the corpse. A quantity of the equisetum like herb sustains uninjured an amphora of coarse earthen ware, with a yellow vitreous glaze. The handles and neck are broken off, and inside it is placed—also with packing—a beautifully executed cinerary urn of red Samian ware, containing ashes, and a small roll of vellum covered with characters which I am unable to decipher, but I believe to be Saxon. Sprinkled through the scroll I however find the Roman name "Q. Sulpicius, Piso," the initials, "S. P. Q. R.," the words "legatus," "crematio," "manes," "lares," and a few others. This scroll I therefore imagine to hold the key to the enigma presented by the many anomalous appearances, I have described and am about to describe. In the amphora, beneath the urn, are a number of ornaments of gold and silver, such as were worn by Saxon females of rank; among them is a kind of a rude locket containing a long tress of glossy yellow hair. The ornaments appear to be a set, as if they had belonged to one person; and this fact, coupled with the presence of their hair, leads me to suppose the ashes contained in the urn to be those of the owner both of them and the hair. The amphora also contains a small packet of coins, nearly one hundred in number, of which forty-three are gold and of the reigns of the Roman Emperors—Honorius, dating A. D. 410 a few of Hadrian, Antonius, and Severus, with earlier dates. The remaining coins are silver, probably Saxon, but owing to their mutilated and defaced condition I am unable to say positively. On one only is a date visible, viz., 465.

From these dates, as well as from the Saxon ornaments, I am inclined to refer the remains to about the date of the first arrival of the Saxons in Britain. The corpse may be that of one of the last emissaries of Rome to this Island—or as history speaks of no political intercourse between Rome and our Island at that time, he may have been connected with a religious, not a civil mission. The ashes I surmise to be those of a Roman female. But how shall we account for the presence of the remains of a Roman and a Saxon in a common tomb? More strange still is the embalming of the Roman and the cremation of the Saxon. The position of the coffin in the bed of the river is also strange; but an overturned boat and the shifting sands may account for this. Possibly the scarf found in the urn may give an explanation of this, and till this has been deciphered we must be content to remain in the dark.

ADVENTURE WITH A BOA CONSTRUCTOR.

At the earliest possible moment after our camp had been pitched, a hunt was set afoot, and Captain Grant, myself, and some attendants, were soon making our way to "the path." There were no animals there when we arrived, except a few hippotami, and we were, therefore, obliged to wait the coming of some more palatable game. Our patience, however, was severely taxed; and, after a long delay, we were about to "bag" a hippopotamus, when one of our attendants, perched in a tree about half a mile distant, began waving his blanket. This was a signal that game was approaching. We immediately drew into cover, and awaited the coming up of the latter.

We were not delayed long, for presently a long column of animals, from the elephant to the hoo-doo, appeared in view, trotting at a good pace to the river. Their flanks were soon presented to us, and each, selecting his object, fired. McColl shot a fine young Buffalo cow, while Captain Grant was equally successful with a hoo-doo, and several spears, cast by our attendants, stopped the career of one or two different animals of the herd.

At this juncture, however, occurred an unexpected adventure, that finished our sport for that day. I had sprung forward, immediately after firing, in order to obtain a fair shot at a huge elephant that I wanted to bring down on account of his immense tusks. I got the desired aim, and pulled the trigger of my second barrel. At the moment of my doing so, a wild cry of alarm, uttered by one of the blacks, called my attention. Glancing round, my eye chanced to range up the foliage of the tree beneath which Captain Grant and myself had lain for several hours previous.

My feelings may possibly be imagined as I beheld an enormous boa constrictor, whose hideous head and neck projected some distance into view, showing that he was about to make a fatal spring. His direction was certainly toward me; and as he flashed from his position like a thunderbolt, I gave myself up, for ere aid could have reached me, fold after fold of the monster would have crushed my strong frame into a quivering pulp. I fell, seemingly caught in a whirlwind of dust, and a strange, indescribable scuffle ensued. In the midst of this terrible strife, I suddenly became conscious of the presence of a second victim, and even after the time that has elapsed since then, I still recollect with what vividness the thought shot across my mind that this second victim was Captain Grant, my noble companion. At last, after being thus whirled about for several seconds, each second seeming to be interminable, there ensued a lull, a stillness as of death, and I opened my eyes, expecting to look upon those unexplored landscapes which are seen only in the country beyond the tomb. Instead of that, I saw Captain Grant leveling his rifle toward me, while, standing beside and behind him, were the blacks, in every conceivable attitude of the most intense suspense.

In a moment I comprehended all. The huge serpent had struck a young buffalo cow, between which and him I had unluckily placed myself at the moment of firing upon the elephant. A most singular good fortune had attended me, however, for instead of being crushed into a mangled mass with the unfortunate cow, my left forearm only had been caught in between the buffalo's body and a single fold of the constrictor. The limb laid just in front of the shoulder at the root of the neck, and thus had a soft bed of flesh into which it was jammed, as it were, by the immense pressure of the serpent's body, that was iron-like in hardness.

As I saw Grant about to shoot, a ter-

ror took possession of me; for if he refrained I might possibly escape after the boa released his folds from the dead cow. But should he fire and strike the reptile, it would, in its convulsions, crush or drag me to pieces. Even as the idea came to me I beheld Grant pause. He appeared to fully comprehend all. He could see how I was situated, that I was still living, and that my delivery depended on the will of the constrictor. We could see every line on each other's face, so close were we, and I would have shouted or spoken, or even whispered at him, had I dared; but the boa's head was within a few inches of mine, and the wink of an eyelid would perhaps settle my doom; so I stared like a dead man at Grant and at the blacks.

Presently the serpent began gradually to relax his folds, and after re-tightening them several times as the crushed buffalo quivered, he unwound one fold entirely. Then he paused. The next iron-like band was the one that held me prisoner; and as I felt it little by little unclasp, my heart stood still with hope and fear. Perhaps, upon being freed, the benumbed arm, uncontrolled by my will, might fall from the cushion-like bed in which it lay. And such a mishap might bring the spare fold around my neck or chest, and then farewell to the sources of the Nile. Oh, how hardly, how desperately I struggled to command myself! I glanced at Grant and saw him handling his rifle anxiously. I glanced at the negroes and saw them still gazing as though petrified with astonishment. I glanced at the serpent's loathsome head and saw its bright, deadly eyes, watching for the least sign of life in its prey.

Now, then, the reptile loosened its fold on my arm a hair's breadth, and now a little more, until half an inch of space separated my arm and its mottled skin. I could have whipped out my hand, but dared not take the risk. Atoms of time dragged themselves into ages, and a minute seemed eternity itself! The second fold was removed entirely, and the next one was easing. Should I dash away now or wait a more favorable movement? I decided upon the former; and with lightning speed, I bounded away toward Grant, the crack of whose piece I heard at the same instant. For the first time in my life, I was thoroughly overcome; and sinking down, I remained in a semi-conscious state for several minutes.

When I fully recovered, Grant and the overjoyed negroes held me up and pointed out the boa, who was still writhing in his death agonies. I shuddered as I looked upon the effects of his tremendous dying strength. For yards around where he lay, grass, bushes, and saplings, and in fact everything except the more fully grown trees, were cut clean off, as though they had been trimmed with an immense scythe. This monster, when measured, was fifty-one feet two inches and a half in extreme length, while round the thickest part of the body its girth was nearly three feet, thus proving, I believe, to be the largest serpent that was ever authentically heard of.—*Adventures of Captain Speke.*

Varieties.

—Only let us get at Lynchburg, and the rebellion will be lynched, says Prentice.

—In Nevada county there are 2,769 school children—1,372 boys and 1,397 girls. Last year there were only 2,295. While the voters of the State are diminishing in numbers the children are increasing rapidly.

—A vulture of unusual size was shot in Santa Cruz county one day last week, measuring ten feet between the tips of its wings when extended.

—The demand for lumber in the Reese River country continues to be very great. The price of wood has advanced to eight dollars per cord in Austin.

—Philadelphia has appropriated one million dollars for new schoolhouses.

—A life of Wilberforce, recently published, records many curious sayings and doings. Among the former is one of Madame de Stael, who, on receiving from that gentleman his work on "Practical Christianity," said to a mutual friend, "C'est l'aurore de l'immortalité."

—Præd's works are to appear in two volumes, edited by his sister, Lady Young, and his nephew Sir George Young.

—Many of the waves of trouble, like those of the ocean, will, if we await them calmly, break at our feet and disappear.

—John Mitchell, the Irish refugee, is said to be in command of the rebel fleet in the James river.