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The Sulphur Mines of Sicily.—The United States Consul at Palermo, states, in a recent report, that although sulphur exists more or less in all countries, Sicily is the only place where it is produced on a large scale, and that island accordingly commands the market. The mines have been worked there for over 300 years, but until 1820 the export was confined within narrow limits. At present the number of mines in Sicily is about 300, nearly 200 of which, however, are said to be destined to stop shortly owing to want of capital. It is estimated that the Sicilian sulphur deposits amount to 30,000,000 tons, and the annual production is about 400,000 tons. If the former estimate be true, and the rate of production is maintained, Sicily will be denuded of sulphur in about 75 years. The royalties vary from 12 to 45 per cent., according to the quality of the ore and the facilities for producing the sulphur: 25 per cent. may be taken as the average. There is a land tax of 36 per cent. of the net income, and the export duty is about 8s. per ton. The lessees receive from 10 to 40 per cent. of the sulphur produced. The external indications of the presence of the sulphur are the appearance of gypsum and sulphurous springs. Frequently several borings have to be made to get at the seam, but when it is found the passages or galleries follow it, and are therefore most irregular. When the miners detach the ore from the surrounding material, vast cavities are often 1-ft which have to be supported on pillars of rock, which often give way, with disastrous results. Water is the greatest difficulty in the way of the miner, and pumps are constantly necessary. At one time miners were allowed to dig where they pleased, with the result that one mine often fell into or upon another, and accordingly a law has been passed requiring plans of the mines to be deposited in a public office. The total number of mining laborers is said to be 25,000; as a rule they can neither read nor write, and are described as indolent and dishonest. They frequently sleep in the mines or the open air, according to the weather, and they violently oppose a relief fund for the families of those who die in the service, because from 1 to 2 per cent. is deducted from their wages to maintain it. There are seven different qualities of sulphur, which are decided by color and not by test. Between 1840 and 1860 the Sicilian sulphur industry was at its zenith; it was free from official interference or taxation, and sulphuric acid was derived exclusively from the sulphur. But science soon discovered that it could be obtained from iron pyrites, and, indeed, it is said that two-thirds of the sulphuric acid used in England is manufactured from pyrites. The decrease in price produced by this discovery caused many of the mines to suspend operations. —*Colliery Engineer.*

The Last of the "Great Eastern:"—A three-days' sale by auction of the entire vessel and her fittings has taken place at Liverpool. The catalogue contained 893 lots, and as a rule satisfactory prices were obtained. The hull and fittings realized over £43,000, the copper bringing \$2,960, the gun metal, etc., £1,800, brass £3,950, lead £4,185, outer iron plates £12,500, inner iron plates, beams and rivets £12,300, and anchors about £300. The engines and engine fittings sold for about £10,000 in addition, bringing up the total to more than £50,000. The breaking up of the steamer will commence on January 1st, will occupy a year, and will, it is estimated, cost in labor from 10s. to 15s. per ton of material.

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