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Miscellaneous.

How Straw Paper is made.

The art of manufacturing paper of straw has made rapid progress since its discovery. The paper was first made in this city in 1854. Although of a dingy yellow hue, harsh and brittle to the touch, and scarcely to be handled without tearing, its production was deemed the marvel of the age (as, indeed, it was), and the very least of the many glorious auguries of it was, that it should entirely revolutionize the newspaper business in time. In those days the straw was most unscientifically boiled in open tubs, and consequently it was never perfectly freed of its silica; and being silicated it was found almost impossible to wet it down for presswork, so that the paper was either too much printed, or not printed at all, and a growl went up from the reading public of alarm and indignation.

Under various mitigated forms, the evil, nevertheless, continued for years, and the growls grew fainter and fainter as the people's eyes and perverted tastes became accustomed to it.

About eighteen months ago letters patent were secured for various important modifications of the original process. The method of making straw paper is as follows:—

The straw is first passed into a cutter, whereby it is reduced to lengths of from three to four inches. It is then thrown into large vats, and thoroughly saturated with weak alkali. A most unpleasant odor hence arises,

somewhat similar to that perceptible in all large breweries, but we are informed it is not prejudicial to the health of the workmen. This operation of mixing is termed "breaking down," and changes the straw in color to a dark biske. It is next filled into large air-tight boilers, fourteen feet in diameter, subjected to a pressure of steam ninety pounds to the square inch, and boiled in another alkali. Each of these boilers will contain eleven thousand pounds of broken straw. It is then ground into pulp, in the same method and by the same machinery that have hitherto been employed in the manufacture of rag paper. It has now been changed to a very dark slate color, and it would be difficult for us to recognize in it any element of the bright yellow straw of an hour since, if we were not previously acquainted with the marvelous nature of the transformation. After this it passes into a series of vats, where, by means of certain bleaching powders, it is brought to a hue of snowy whiteness, and reduced to a proper consistency by water. The mass now bears much resemblance to plaster-of-paris in solution, and is ready to be worked up into paper.

The most interesting process yet remains to be described, but we must pass into another apartment to witness it. At the eastern extremity of the room is a sort of trough, into which the pulpy liquor is pumped by steam power, and from which it flows upon a horizontal sieve of very fine copper wire. The fibres of the pulp at once arrange themselves on this sieve. A species of film is thus formed, which, though not a hundredth of an inch in thickness and largely saturated with water, has sufficient body to answer every purpose. It