

of Massachusetts, by whom they were discovered in a quarry near Turner's Falls. There has been also discovered by Capt. Flinders, on the south coast of New Holland, some very large nests, measuring 26 feet in circumference and 32 inches in height, resembling in dimensions some that were described by Capt. Cook, as seen by him on the north-east coast of the same island. It would appear, by some communications made to the editor of the *Athenæum*, that Professor Hitchcock, of Massachusetts, had suggested that the colossal nest belonged to the moa, or gigantic bird of New Zealand, of which several species have been determined by Professor Owen from bones sent to him from New Zealand where the race is now extinct, but possibly at the present time inhabiting the warmer climates of New Holland, in which place Capt. Cook discovered those large nests. Between the year 1821 and 1823, Mr. James Burton discovered, on the west coast on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea, opposite the peninsula of Mount Sinai, three colossal nests, within the space of a mile, which he judged to be about 15 feet in height, in one of which was found the thorax of a man, and a silver watch of Geo. Prior; and in another some pieces of woollen cloth and an old shoe; what genus or species, Mr. Burton could not determine from the accounts of the Arabs, but presumed that they had been occupied by large birds of the stork kind. The gigantic stork was the inhabitant of the Delta, and was occasionally entrapped by the inhabitants or peasantry, and brought with the wild animals, as a curiosity, to the great landholders or farmers, of the products of the Nile. Whether the Egyptian birds bear any analogy to those recorded in the pages of the Great Stone Book of Nature (the new red sandstone formation), or whether those described by Professor Owen, he was not qualified to say, nor was it the intention of that paper to discuss, but rather to bring together the facts, and associate them.

#### ELECTRO-AGRICULTURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE WIGTOWNSHIRE FREE PRESS.

Sir,—The arrangement for magneto-electric culture, to which you have already referred as in progress at Broadstone, on the principles of Dr. Forster, of Findrassiehouse, will determine the full value of that mode of arrangement. The oblong square, outlined by the wires, forms the central portion of a plot of mummy wheat. It will be thus seen whether the influence extends beyond these wires, and how far, or if it be limited to the portion thus insulated; and this plot may also be compared with the adjoining one.

I have made arrangements of another description in a distinct part of Broadstone, by surrounding a plot of mummy wheat with wires, their termini being connected with the poles of a Voltaic battery composed of concentric cylinders of zinc and copper, kept in action by water, the loss by evaporation being supplied. Thus will maintain a continuous and uniform electric action for an indefinite period. I have also stretched across the oblong square an iron wire reposing in the magnetic meridian—*non verroris*. I find that some of my mummy wheat has already tillered into nine and ten stems. I am, &c.,

Stranraer, May 12, 1845.

J. MURRAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE REPORTER AND CHRONICLE.

Sir,—In last week's *Reporter* I observe an article respecting the power of electricity in assisting vegetation. It appears startling and new, but brings to my mind a circumstance which happened more than 60 years since, when I was a boy. If the following facts will tend to corroborate those contained in the article related to, you may give them insertion. The year 1782 was a very bad year—worse than could be remembered by any one living; 1783 was but very little better; but 1784 was one of the most abundant years ever remembered by the oldest man then living. During the whole of that summer the thunder was most dreadful, beginning every night about ten o'clock, and continuing until morning. The thunder was not accompanied with rain, which fell in the day-time. The fruit-trees bore well, and the fruit was very fine—

much finer than I have seen since. As far as I know, the before-mentioned thunder was most heard in Aberdeenshire, more than farther north or south. I cannot make any comments on the above truths, but hope they may give some light upon so very important a subject.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

WILLIAM FROST

Derby, May 12, 1845.

A DELICATE DISH.—It is said that Mr. Cushing, on being asked to dine with Mandarin Lin, discovered on the table something of which he ate exorbitantly, thinking it to be duck. Not speaking Chinese, and wishing to know what it was, he pointed to it after he had finished, saying to his host interrogatively, "Quack, quack, quack?" The mandarin, with equal brevity, replied with a shake of the head, "Bow, wow, wow!" Mr. Cushing's feelings can be imagined.

Up to the 29th of May last the total money subscribed and authorised to be raised in Great Britain and Ireland for railway and other schemes was £100,331,000; viz., in England £79,621,600, Scotland £3,858,000, and Ireland £11,350,000.

A few days ago a farmer, in the neighbourhood of Chesterfield, got up in his sloop, saddled his pony, drove his cows home, and was about to milk them, when he was awoken by his boy.

In Great Britain and Ireland, there are, according to Parliamentary returns, 2,250,000 horses, worth about £67,000,000; about 15,000,000 of black cattle, worth about £215,000,000; 50,000,000 of sheep, worth about £67,000,000; and 18,000,000 of pigs, worth about £18,270,000.

RARA AVIS.—Mr. Lamb, gardener to W. M. Alexander, Esq., of Southbar, has three young black-birds in his possession, reared in the same nest, two of which are quite black, and the other as white as a swan, not a foul feather being on the body.

#### PERFECTION IN FARMING.

If in farming my friends you would hope to succeed,  
From love of old customs let your mind first be freed;  
To these excellent maxims fail not to attend,  
For they contain all the pith the skill'd ever penn'd.  
First, then, *drain* well your land or your land will drain you,  
Than this depend on it there's no maxims more true;  
If from each acre of land you'd reap a large rick,  
"Muck's the mother of money," so lay it on *thick*;  
Each *weed* is a thief and should be banished the land,  
Extirpate the whole breed then by hoe or by hand;  
As each root doth bore downwards in search of its food,  
Subsoiling you'll find will effect a great good;  
Attend then my friends to the maxims I've written,  
And soon you will find that perfection you've hit on. R.  
—*Chat Moss, near Manchester: 22nd June, 1845.*

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WILLIAM EVANS, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR