

When were Steel Pens first made? In 1803;

What were used as Pens in ancient times? Reeds cut and pointed like a quill.

*Pencils.*—What are Pencils made of? Of a mineral called black-lead or plumbago, enclosed in a small stick of cedar-wood.

Where is the best Black-lead found? In Cumberland.

*India-rubber.*—What is India-rubber? The sap of a tree that grows in South America.

How is it got from the tree? Holes are made in the bark, through which the sap runs into clay cups or shells placed ready to receive it.

What is it like as it comes from the tree? It is white, and hardens in the air.

What is done to it afterward? It is moulded into bottles of a pear shape, and passed through the smoke of a palm-nut fire.

What is it remarkable for? It is water-proof, and very elastic.

Why is it called Rubber? Because one of its earliest uses was to *rub* out pencil-marks.

To what other uses is it now put? Coats, shoes, and caps are made of it; as well as combs, trays, and a great many ornaments.

*Gutta-percha.*—What is Gutta-percha? The sap of a tree that grows in the East Indies.

What is it remarkable for? It is tough, easily bent, and water-proof.

What things are made of it? Soles of shoes, water-pipes, speaking-tubes, picture-frames, cups, and many ornaments.

Why is it easily manufactured? Because a very slight heat softens it, and then it may be moulded into any shape.

Why is it used to cover telegraph-cables that pass under the sea? Because it keeps the water out, and because it keeps the electricity in.

*Cork.*—What is Cork? The outer bark of a kind of oak-tree.

Where does it grow? In Spain, France, Italy, and the north of Africa.

How is it gathered? The whole trunk is skinned of its bark once in every eight or ten years; for if the inner bark is uninjured, the outer bark grows again.

For what is it remarkable? It is very light, elastic, and proof against most liquids.

What is it used for? For making stoppers of bottles, net-floats, life-buoys, lining of shoes, and many other things.

*Sponge.*—What is Sponge? The soft skeleton of a sea-animal.

Of what does Sponge consist? Of a great number of tubes, which during the life of the animal are lined with a soft flesh like jelly.

Where is it found? Chiefly in the Mediterranean; the finest coming from the Grecian Islands in the Archipelago.

How is it obtained? By diving; the natives of these islands are trained to be divers from childhood.

*Coral.*—What is Coral? It is a stony substance, formed by little sea-animals.

Where do these animals live? They are most abundant in warm seas: some small kinds are found near Britain.

What is the form of Coral? It is sometimes in masses, but oftener branched.

What is a Coral-reef? It is a ridge of coral along a coast-line, produced by vast colonies of these small animals.

Are red and black coral the same as the common coral? No; they are produced in the interior of a fleshy body by similar small animals, which live at the bottom of the sea.

*Pearl.*—What is Pearl? A hard, shining substance, found in a shell-fish called the pearl-oyster.

Where is the Pearl-oyster found? Plentifully in the seas about the East