

high, and calculated to contain 150 tons. Brass, which has often been confounded by ancients with copper, is merely an alloy made by mixing one third of zinc with two thirds of copper. Brass was made by the ancients without discovering zinc. Iron, the most important of metals, came into common use long after copper was well-known. It was regarded by the ancients as a symbol of war, and received the name of Mars, the god of arms. Homer mentions a mass of iron as one of the prizes at the funeral games given by Achilles in honor of Patroclus:—

*Then buried the hero, thundering on the ground
A mass of iron, an enormous round,
Whose weight and size the circling Greeks admire,
Rode from the furnace, and but shaped by fire.*

In 1597 B. C. the Lacedemonians coined iron into money. At Babylon the huge stones of the bridges were held together by bands of iron fixed in places by molten lead. Thucydides tells us that the walls of Piræus were fastened in the same way. In preparing the stone for building the Pyramids iron was used, Herodotus affirms; and Iron must have been employed in engraving the beautiful old gems which now are so valuable. The Ninevites made tools of iron, the ancient Britons made spears and lances of it, and the Romans, during their occupation of Britain, smelted iron to a considerable extent. The iron mines of Elba are said to have been worked from the time of Alexander the Great; and Pliny speaks of this region as "inexhaustible in its iron." The mines of Arragon and New Castile in Spain are supposed to have been worked from the times of the late Jewish kings, successively by the Tyrians, the Carthaginians, and the Romans. Through all the nations of high antiquity iron is mentioned almost always in a way that shows it to have been a partially common but always highly esteemed metal. Indeed, from the difficulty of working it with the primitive means at the command of men just emerged from barbarism, it was held at a high price. Only 153 years ago, Batachoff, in Russia, bartered iron for an equal weight of copper coin. Lead, a blueish-gray metal, was known to the Egyptians at an early date, and is mentioned by Homer; it was used in Rome in pipes to convey water, and in thin sheets for roofing purposes. The powder (cyrrassa) used by the Athenian ladies to tint their complexion, was our white lead. Lead owes its usefulness in the metallic

state chiefly to its softness and fusibility. In ancient times tin was scarce, and the chief supply was from India, Spain, and the celebrated mines of Cornwall, England, which have been worked uninterruptedly from the earliest historic periods. Tin was used by the Egyptians nearly 4,000 years ago.—*Ex.*

FOES OF THE TELEGRAPH.

If you will kick or pound on a telegraph pole or place your ear against one on a windy day what will the noise remind you of? A hive of bees? Precisely. So it does the bears in Norway. Bears are passionately fond of honey, and when in one of the wind districts bruin hears the humming of the wires he follows the sound to the post where it is loudest and begins to tear away the stones heaped round the poles in rocky soil to steady them, in order to get at the hive which he imagines to be there. In his disappointment and disgust he usually leaves savage marks of his claws in the wood. Nor is he the only victim of the wires. In the electric exhibition at Paris, they show the top of a thick pine telegraph pole, through which a woodpecker has drilled a hole several inches in diameter. The bird had apparently perched on the pole and taking the humming of the wires for the buzzing of a nest of insects in the wood, and had set himself manfully—or birdfully—to dig them out. Wolves will not stay in Norway where a telegraph line has been built. It was formerly the custom to protect farms by planting poles around them strung with cords, something like rabbit snares, and gradually the wolves came to respect these precautions so that a line stretched across the neck of the peninsula would protect the whole district. The wolves take the telegraph for a new and improved snare, and promptly leave the country when a line is built. On our own treeless plains the buffalo hails the telegraph pole as an ingenious contrivance for his own benefit. Like all cattle, he delights in scratching himself, and he goes through the performance so energetically that he knocks down the post. An early builder of telegraph lines undertook to protect the posts by inserting brad-awls into the wood, but the thick skinned buffalo found the brad-awls an improvement, as affording him a new sensation, and scratched down more poles than ever.

In Sumatra the elephants are systematically opposed to telegraph lines, and at least twenty times a year make raids on them. In May, 1876, the elephants tore down the poles for a distance of several furlongs and hid the wires and insulators in the cane jungle, and for three nights in succession they repeated the performance as regularly as the repairers rebuilt the line during the day. The monkeys and apes are about as formidable enemies, as they use the wires for swings and trapeze and carry off the glass insulators as valuable prizes; then, when the repairer goes to correct the mischief, he may be pounced upon by a tiger or driven up the post by a mad buffalo. In Japan the special enemies of the telegraph are the spiders, which grow to an immense size and avail themselves of the wires as excellent framework for their webs. So thick are the cords the Japanese spiders spin that often, especially when they are covered with dew, they serve to connect the wires with each other on the ground, and so stop them from working. In the sea the wires are not any safer, as a small worm has developed itself since cables came into fashion which bores its way through iron wire and gutta-percha, lets in the water and so destroys a line worth millions of dollars. When a great storm comes on in the centre of the ocean, and the cable breaks while it is being laid, or threatens to break, no one is alarmed. They fasten the cable to a buoy and come back afterward and pick it up; or if it is at the bottom of the sea they drop a dredge, with a mule or so of rope, and fish out the precious thread, as large as one of your fingers, almost as easy as you would fish up a penny from the bottom of a tub of water with the tongs. But the little worm, no bigger than a needle, is more formidable than the elements or the hurricane.—*Ex.*

THE WATCH RACKET.

From the Hamilton Spectator.

The Toronto Globe Printing Company makes announcement that it has gone into the intellectual and exhilarating business of peddling nickel watches. In order to facilitate the business the company has erected a tent on the exhibition grounds, where the watches and the Weekly Globe will compete with circus lemonade and fat women for popular favour. The cases will be elegantly illustrated with wood-cut engravings,