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NEW AND CURIOUS.

Aluminum has been used for the construction of a fire-proof curtain for an opera house. The curtain is 60 feet wide by 54 feet high, and its weight, composed of aluminum sheets one-twelfth of an inch thick, is 4000 pounds. If sheet iron had been used instead of the lighter metal, the weight would have been increased to 11,000 pounds.

A process of making wool from limestone has been discovered. The discoverer says that by a combination of 94 per cent of the limestone, chemicals and one of the commonest minerals, pure wool is obtainable as white as snow. This substance can be manufactured cheaper than sheep can be raised and clipped, is not affected by fire or water, and the supply seems to be almost unlimited.

A Frenchman has invented a telephone with which singing and speaking can be heard at a distance of 300 feet from the receiver, and which, when required, registers its message by means of an attached phonograph. This will be one of the great attractions of the Paris exposition next year. By its aid several hundred people will be enabled to listen to a lecture delivered in English at London, in German at Munich, in Russian at St. Petersburg, or in French at Brussels.

At Gwandu, Africa, which contains between 10,000 and 15,000 inhabitants, the town is surrounded by a palisade of tree poles, the top of every pole being crowned with a human skull. There are six gates, and the approach to each is laid with a pavement of human skulls, the tops being the only parts that show above ground. More than 2000 skulls are used in the pavement leading up to each gate. The pavement is of snowy whiteness and polished to the smoothness of ivory by the daily passage of hundreds of naked feet.

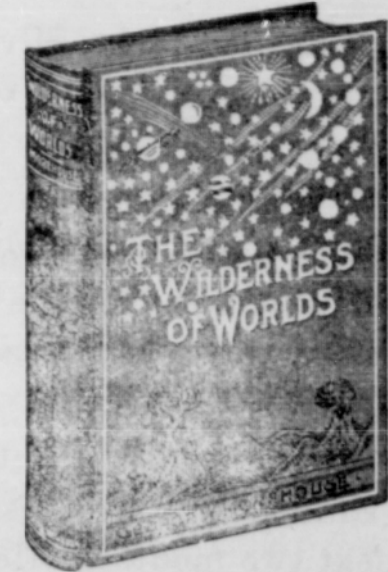
There are in Africa, Australia and South America certain birds, evidently not related ornithologically, that, because of their peculiar habits, are known as "honey birds". They are so named because of their great fondness for the dainty product of the busy bee. Their ingenious methods of obtaining the honey afford an interesting study in animal reasoning or instinct. A traveler in Venezuela tells in the Scientific American how one of these birds led him, by some such means as a mother bird uses to entice one away from the vicinity of her nest, to a hive of wild bees; and when he had laid bare the store of honey, the bird came in for its share of the sweet.

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