Prineville Review

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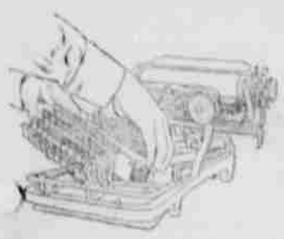

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Abstracter of Titles

Prineville, Oregon.

Why the American Steel-Maker Dominates the World.

FROM THE IRON AND STEEL NUMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.

The mere existence of natural supplies of the raw materials of manufacture would not in itself be sufficient to account for the marvelous growth of the iron and steel industry in America. The raw materials must be brought together to some common center, and the transportation of this enormous tonnage, the frequent handling and transshipment that is necessary, must be done with the least possible amount of expense. If the American ironmaster is to start with anything like an even chance in competition with European manufacturers; for these are not under the necessity of transporting their materials over a thousand miles of distance- before they can smelt them in the blast furnace. Now, here it is that man has so ably co-operated with nature. Acting on the well-established industrial principle that the greater the magnitude of the scale of operations, the less is the cost per ton of the finished product, the machinery and general plant for excavating, handling and transporting the ore have been built on a colossal scale. At the mines, steam shovels capable of lifting five tons of ore at each stroke will load a 25-ton car in two and a half minutes, or at the rate of 600 tons an hour, and in accordance with the same policy cars have grown to 50 tons in capacity and locomotives to 130 tons in weight. When the ore trains reach Lake Superior special automatic, quick-acting machinery unloads the ore direct into special ore steamers built for this particular work. At the eastern terminal ports similar machinery unloads the ore from steamer to railroad, where again 50-ton cars and 130-ton engines haul the precious mineral in trains of 1,000 tons or more total weight, into the heart of the coal and coke region, where it is finally unloaded by special machinery at the blast furnaces.

The ingenuity and resourcefulness shown in the matter of handling and transporting the huge tonnage necessary for the manufacture of over 17,000,000 tons of iron a year, was ably seconded when it came to the matter of recovering the iron in the blast furnaces, and fabricating it into the thousand and one forms in which the finished product is put upon the market. In no single branch of industry has more thought been given to labor saving than in the manufacture of iron and steel. In the first place, to reduce handling and transshipment to a minimum the processes are made as far as possible continuous. The erection of a typical modern steel works will call for a plot of ground which is rather a parallelogram than a square, and there are in the country to-day works that on a width of a quarter of a mile will extend for a mile and a quater in length. At the upper end will be the stock-yard, with its artificial mountains of ore and coke; next the blast furnaces; then the Bessemer converters, or the open-hearth furnaces, as the case may be. Then will come the soaking pits or furnaces for heating the cast ingots. Beyond them, in some cases, will stretch one vast building a thousand feet or more in length, with its blooming rolls and shears, roughing rolls, finishing rolls, and steel saws succeeding each other in orderly succession, until at the end of the building one can see the finished product being loaded onto the cars almost before the last trace of the furnace heat has gone out of it. Moreover, in its long journey through the mills, the material has been rolled and heated and rolled again, positively with no manual labor whatever; and in many of the mills that are notable for the great tonnage that they turn in a single day, the continuous processes are carried on with such rapidity that the journey of a thousand feet or more through the mills is made on one single heat.

WHAT STEEL IS MADE OF.

The raw materials of manufacture in making pig iron consist of iron ore, coke and limestone, in the proportions of 2 pounds of ore to 1 pound of coke and 1-3 of a pound of limestone. In the manufacture of the steel from which rails are rolled, there are two fundamental processes; first, the reduction of the ore in the blast furnace; and then the conversion of the molten iron into steel in the converter. The description of the blast furnace is the same for all the subsequent branches of the steel industry; for blast furnace practice is broadly the same to-day in every furnace throughout the country. Each furnace (there are eleven in all at the Edgar Thomson Works) consists of a huge steel shell varying from 75 to 90 feet in height. It has its largest diameter at about a quarter of its height, and tapers regularly to its smallest diameter at the top platform. The upper portion is known as the "stack," the lower portion as the "bosh," while below this is the "hearth," in which the molten cast iron collects. The bosh, which is just above the tuyeres, is provided with annular hollow bronze castings built into the brickwork, through which a stream of cold water is circulated for the purpose of keeping down the temperature of the brickwork at the hottest part of the furnace. It should be explained that the whole interior of the steel shell is lined with about three feet of brickwork.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ARMOR

It is a mistake to suppose that protection was first used in either land or naval warfare in modern times.

On land, as is well known, earthworks and masonry works of great thickness were used, but it is not so well known that the sides of ships of war of one hundred years ago were in many ways better protected relatively than our present ironclads. The frigate "Constitution," of the war of 1812, was protected against perforation at the waterline, whereby the ship may be destroyed, or perforation of her battery space, by which her gun crews could be destroyed, better that the ships of to-day, taking into account the guns of her time. At present the 12-inch guns, using 850 or 1,000 pound projectiles, are mounted in turrets clothed with 12-inch armor. These turrets can be penetrated by 12-inch guns with anything but a very oblique impact at any distance at which a gun is likely to hit. Similarly, too, the 6-inch guns of ships, or their 7-inch guns, which constitute the next step in the scale, are protected by 6-inch or 7-inch armor, and this armor can be penetrated by a 6-inch gun at as great ranges as it is likely to hit it. This armor is all face hardened. The front or outside of the armor is glass-hard, while its back is comparatively soft and tough.

The armor plate in the course of manufacture is super-carbonized, that is, its face is impregnated with an additional amount of carbon, in a way similar to the well-known case-hardening process, whereby the outside face of the plate, when tempered in water, becomes intensely hard. The projectiles used against this armor are hardened at the point, their bodies being, as in the rear body of the armor, comparatively soft, and the contest between the plate and the projectile constitutes very largely the modern science of artillery. The velocity of the projectiles is pushed to the utmost by increasing the weight of the charge of powder used to propel them, and in the manufacture of the projectiles it is endeavored to make the point of the projectiles very hard and the back soft, but yet not too soft. If the projectiles are hard all over, or similarly if an armor plate is hard all through, they will go to pieces on impact. The tough, comparatively soft, back part of both plate and projectile tends to hold the hard part together. In the last few years the practice of putting soft metal caps on the hard points of projectiles intended to pierce armor has become universal. There are many theories as to why these soft metal caps aid the projectiles in getting through the hard armor, but none of them seems entirely satisfactory. Of the fact, however, that they do increase the penetration of projectiles, there can be no doubt.

In the matter of protection or armor, in the land of coast defenses of this country, the principle of the disappearing gun has been utilized in a very large degree. The gun, mounted behind a very thick parapet, rises only for a very short space of time when it is to be fired, and disappears on rocking levers behind the parapet immediately upon firing, and is loaded in the lower position. It will be seen that the protection of such guns is very good, but their rate of fire is lessened. Possibly it is true that the rate of fire of large guns is not materially less on disappearing mountings than on others; but as guns grow smaller, the time occupied in their rising and falling and in aiming them has a greater influence, and their rate of fire is seriously diminished. For such smaller classes of guns in our coast defenses it is planned to use gun shields, which are substantially armor plates covering the gun and its detachment of gunners against hostile fire.

WHY ARMOR PLATE IS COSTLY.

The general public has always been mystified at the extremely high price paid for armor plate. The most important item is the great length of time required for the successful manufacture of a plate; for, on an average, every plate is being constantly worked upon, either in furnace, forge, machine shop, or annealing and tempering department, for a continuous period of nine months. Other causes of high cost are; the large number of separate operations, the frequency with which the great masses must be transported, and the distances over which they must be carried in their journey from one department to another. To illustrate the vast scale on which an armor plate and gun steel works is laid out and the distances to be covered from shop to shop, we may mention that the whole establishment of the Bethlehem Steel Works extends in one direction continuously for a length of a mile and a quarter, and that the forty or fifty handlings and transshipments, which occur in making a single Krupp plate, take place in and between such buildings as the open-hearth structure, which is 111 feet wide by 1,[illegible] feet in length; the machine shop, 116½ feet in width by 1,375 feet in length; the armor forge, 850 feet in length; and a face hardening department and an armor-plate machine shop, both of which are but little less in size. Further elements of expense are the large percentage of losses which is liable to occur, the high first cost of the extensive plants that must be laid down, and the fact that new and improved methods of manufacture may at any time render the plant more or less obsolete. The greater cost of the Krupp armor is largely compensated for by its much greater resisting qualities, which make it possible to give equal defensive qualities for 20

(Concluded on page 4.)

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