

ROCKING STONES

GIANT Boulders That Are Delicately Balanced

Connecticut Has Some Specimens to Be Proud Of—Other New England States Possessing Historic Interest.

There are a number of "rocking stones," so called, in New England, but about two years ago a city geologist published the statement that he knew of less than half a dozen of the kind in the region noted. There are boulders enough in the New England States, he explained, that are set up on small bases, and some of them are more or less delicately balanced, but of "genuine rocking stones, that may be made to rock, and are more than the number I have named," says a Norwich (Conn.) correspondent.

The scientific man's statement was published far and wide, and in three months was contradicted forty times, mainly by dwellers in rural towns in all parts of New England. Three in Massachusetts, and one or more of them were mammoth monoliths. Eight or ten were reported in New Hampshire and several in Maine, while no end of rocking stones were located in Connecticut and Rhode Island, since, as is well known, these States, which evidently caught the greatest part of the rocky debris of the glacial era, are thickly strewn with boulders of all sorts and shapes. In this country alone rural observers cited not less than a dozen or more instances of perfect rocking stones.

Recently an influential Mystic citizen has declared that there are no less than five perfect rocking stones in the little seashore hamlet of Quabaug, near Mystic, in the southern end of this county. "The quiet little village," he says, "can boast of more rocking stones than any other town of its size in the United States can do. Good authorities say that only two good specimens exist in New England, one in Massachusetts and one at the Haley farm, at Noank, a quaint little old-fashioned hamlet on a knoll at the seashore, not far from Mystic. It is evident therefore that the present ones are not well known."

"But there is no doubt that they are as excellent examples of the glacial period as any that can be found anywhere. They vary in size from a stone weighing three tons, on the land of Miss Nancy J. Moredock, to one weighing forty-five tons, on the farm occupied by James Lord. Another stone is found on the lands of Elias Davis and two on the farm of Ambrose Miner.

"Perhaps the best specimen of the whole lot is the rocking stone on the land of Miss Moredock. It is about four feet long, two feet wide and three feet high, and it oscillates about five inches. It can be rocked by the pressure of two fingers. It is set on a sloping ledge, and it looks as if it could be easily rolled off and down the hill, but the combined strength of half a dozen men could not stir it an inch out of its place. The rock has been a great play-house for children, and the oldest inhabitants can remember the spot as their earliest play-ground."

All of these rocking stones are in the immediate neighborhood of Fort Hill, where the once powerful and illustrious Pequot Indians made their last stand against the whites, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, a region that is thickly dotted with lonely isolated, sentinel-like, tall boulders. At Fort Hill, near Mystic, overlooking the ocean, the Pequots, with all their braves, squaws and papooses, were gathered in their largest and strongest fort, when Capt. Jack Mason and his band of Puritan braves, coming from Saybrook, at the mouth of the Connecticut River, stormed the fort, burned the red men's wigwams and massacred most of the warriors, with the women and children who were not burned in the wigwams.

The descendants of Capt. John Mason's soldiers—the people of Mystic and Noank—a year ago dragged a great boulder, with thirty yoke of oxen, from its resting place in a lonely pasture near the famous rocking stones and cut and carried it to a handsome monolith, which they erected, amid a great concourse of people, in honor of the Pequot massacre on the summit of Fort Hill. The great boulder handsomely polished and bearing on one of its finished sides an appropriate inscription in commemoration of that mighty deed of arms, is now one of the most conspicuous objects along the Sound shore as seen from the ocean. It weighed in the rough not less than twenty-eight or thirty tons. In an open meadow, near the old Norwich town green, two miles north of this city, there is a similar monolith that was erected a great many years ago at the grave of Capt. Mason.

Boulders, some of which weigh thousands of tons, are altogether too plentiful in Connecticut and Rhode Island to have any commercial value, but not many months ago a wealthy gentleman journeyed to the

gentle boulder was shipped to his home in the West. Its weight was over thirty tons. In transporting it from its site on the plain six miles to the Niantic Railroad station, several teamsters, with fifteen or twenty yoke of oxen, were busy for six days. It cost the Ohio man about \$1,000 to get the big stone home with him. It is now the central figure in his spacious lawn.

The army of boulders on Quonochontaug plain, which are mainly oval in shape and sit up like penguins, often in parallel rows, or like companies of soldiers on parade, is one of the most curious phenomena in New England. Although they were deposited there by nature in a haphazard way; with no orderly alignment, yet so symmetrical is their shape as a rule, so startling their posture and withal so numerous are they that they are said to be quite as singular and impressive, in respect to the appearance they give the desolate plain, especially at dusk, as the famed stone rows of Stonehenge, England.

INDIANS AS MARKSMEN

Poor Shots With Rifles, but Their Revolver Shooting is Good.

Reports received at the War Department of recent small arms competitions among the troops in the far West show conclusively that the noble red man, as represented in Uncle Sam's military service, does not compare very favorably with his pale face brother in the matter of sharp shooting. There is a popular idea gained from Cooper's Leather Stocking tales and even more modern literature about the "dusky denizens of the forest," that all warriors are superior marksmen. Army statistics prove that this is a romantic delusion so far as the Indian soldier is concerned.

In recent competition the Indians who have been enlisted in the Army of the Colorado have had a chance to show what they could do side by side with white men. The best that can be said of them in the report is that they have made progress since being enlisted, but it also says that the sights on the rifles are still incomprehensible to them, and that much practice has been necessary on the part of the officers to bring them to any understanding at all of the principles of marksmanship. Troop L of the Second Cavalry, that being an Indian company, showed an individual average figure of merit of 42.22, while the average figure of merit of the company was 78.88.

In collective firing the Indian average was 81.57, while the men of the other troops made an average of 62.70. The Indians in the Eleventh Infantry made for their company (1) the average individual figure of merit of 25.05, while the figure of the other troops was 62.87. In the Sixteenth Infantry there is one company of Indians. Their figure of merit by individual classification was an average of 27.14, while the figure of the white troops was the high average of 93.16. In collective firing the Indian average was 29.39, as compared with the white average of 70.47.

At pistol firing the Indians do better. There is a separate report on this sort of firing for the same troops, and Troop L, of the Second Cavalry, being composed exclusively of Indians, made a record of which the men should be proud, if they ever learn about it. At dismounted practice they made an average of 73.88, as compared with the general average for the command of 66.70; at the mounted practice their average was far ahead of that of the white troops, and their average per cent. for all firing was 65.72, as compared with 59.48 for the whole command. The Indians stood first in order of merit for revolver firing for the department.

There were some other interesting statistics obtained by this practice. The natives of the United States stood eleventh in order of merit among nationalities, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, France, Denmark, Scotland, Germany, Canada, and Belgium coming in order before the United States. The men of six feet in height and over were also highest in order of merit as sharpshooters, and the shortest men were the lowest. The men of light blue eyes were the best marksmen, with those of dark blue next. Even the light-blue-eyed men were the best marksmen among the negroes. The report calls attention to the fact that the percentage made by the Indians at revolver practice was greater than the per centage made by the winners of the gold medals in the revolver matches at the cavalry competitions of the department for the years 1892 and 1893. It was also the highest record made under existing regulations by any troop in the department.—[Washington Star.

Among a party of pilgrims who arrived at the Torizto-Sergievski Monastery, in St. Petersburg, recently, was a man of 118 years. He had tramped from Luga, some eighty-five miles, and showed no weariness.

Dryden always trembled violently for some time after concluding an interesting poem.



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It is hard to conceive how electricity can be directly utilized in "unhairing" the much-prized skin of the seal, and making it ready for use as wearing apparel, but this is actually done. Like the skin of the beaver and other amphibious animals, the seal skin is covered with soft downy hairs, among which are interspersed a certain portion of long stiff hairs, which have to be removed before the well known glossy appearance of the skin can be produced. Formerly this unhairing was done by hand, and was naturally a tedious process. A machine has been invented for doing it by electricity, and both the time and labor involved have been greatly reduced. One New York firm alone is now operating sixty of these machines in the sewing and preparation of sealskins, for which 100 girls are kept constantly busy. The machine somewhat resembles a cotton gin, and like it, has a rotary brush. But in the place of the saw used in the gin, a platinum wire twenty inches long is employed. The wire is kept red hot by passing a heavy current through it. The seal skin runs through rollers up to a flat steel plate, over the edge of which it turns sharply. The long hairs stand out stiffly and pass across the hot platinum wire, which is kept tightly stretched, low enough down to burn the hairs off. The skin then feeds .002 of an inch before the hot wire comes down again. As it passes the rotary brushes the skin is cleaned, and the buried hairs are brushed off and the fur comes out smooth and shining.—[Chicago Record.

A Persistent Merchant.

Says an American, now in Japan, in the Chicago Record: "The first gentleman who called upon me at the Grand Hotel, Yokohama, was Ah Sing, importer and tailor. He made an early call—6.20. He remarked outside the door: 'Mister, me came measure you suit clothes. Allee same hot.' 'Call around again, please; I am not up yet.' He did. Called again at 6.30. Desiring to encourage enterprise in a foreign country, I let him in. 'Take measure now?' he said. 'Go it,' I replied, because it was red hot and the Japanese sun was shining clear through the panes, shades and shutters. 'Make suit \$2 50.' He had samples with him in a valise. 'Suit ready morrow morning.' And, true enough, he did. Ah Sing is a Chinese merchant who has done business in Japan for several years. He employs forty-three tailors, and can give some of our merchants many pointers on prices and promptness."

Peanuts as Food.

In a German medical journal Dr. P. Furbinger treats of the peanut as an article of food rich in albumen, of which it contains 47 per cent, together with 10 per cent. of fat and non-nitrogenous extractive matters. He recommends the use of roasted peanuts in the form of soup or mush. On account of their cheapness peanuts are recommended as a popular article of food, especially in poorhouses and the like; moreover, they are recommended as an article of food for the corpulent, for diabetics, and for the subjects of kidney diseases, in the last mentioned of whom foods rich in animal albumen are to be avoided.

Calcutta has 681,500 population and 2,873 police, who in 1891 made 47,802 arrests.



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