# Scientific.

#### LEAD PENCILS.

It is estimated that 500,000,000 pencils are used annually. In the United States alone, more than 2,000,000 of this number are used, the most part of which are received from abroad. The Cumberland mines, in England, have heretofore furnished the best quality of the mineral, graphite or plumbago, from which the lead is had; but the supply has been nearly exhausted by constant working, and few of the genuine Cumberland pencils are now made. In Germany, where the pencil trade is most flourishing, there are several manufactories, the largest of which is at Stein, kept by the Fabor Brothers. It is a family business with them, their father and grandfather having been engaged in it before them, and has been carried on until the name of Faber, as a pencil maker, is renowned. A manufactory has existed for some time at Concord, Mass., and another extensive one has now been established near Hoboken New Jersey. At this establishment nearly all the work is done by machinery, which is constructed by machinists at the factory, while in Gormany the pencils are made by hand. For the wood of the pencil Florida cedar is used, being cut up with small saws. One set of the wooden slips are grooved, and fitted to other pieces called -"covers," and then left till the lead is inserted. The plumbago is not properly prepared until it has gone through a process of breaking, cleaning, mixing, pressing, and baking. When it comes out of the grinding mill, it goes into large tanks, where it is refined and separated from all ingredients, and it is then placed in a bowl-shaped machine, where it is rolled and mixed. It is next pressed, and this is the most interesting of the various degrees of preparation it under goes. A cylinder with tubes in the bottom is used, and through these runs the lead in hexagon, square, round, or any other shape wanted, and is received in coils underneath by a small boy, who manages the board on which it falls with great dexterity. Other boys take the lead afterward and put it in models, which are then sent to the heatingroom for drying and hardening; for the lead, when it comes from the press, is soft and flexible, and wanting in tenacity. It is left in the heating-room one day, when it is removed to a kiln, where it is put in crucibles and burned after the manner of burntbrick. When this is done, about twenty girls are kept employed in putting the leads into grooves, and gluing on the covers, and this work is performed in a very rapid and systematic style. The cutting of the strip is done by knives run by a machine, and after they are turned out are put into another machine, where they are smoothed. From there they go to the carpenter's shop, where the ends are neatly cut, and they then pass through the polisher's hands, the printer's, and the counter's, and are finally put in boxes ready for sale.

# Rural Economy.

### THE WINTER OF FAMINE

severe, protracted Winter, which, in spite of peace universal, and all but unbroken, has minute, a more careful cultivation of the been signalized by unusual and pervading suffering from famine. Want has made itself felt among us upon the broad, sandy levels of the South and in the crowded cities of the North-in part owing to the desolations of War and the disorganization of Labor, but in part also to the deficiency of our last harvest. Incessant rains and floods throughout the Spring and early Summer of 1867 retarded planting and rotted seed in the South, so that the all-devouring Army Worm, finding the cotton green and immature, ate at least half the bolls, reducing to Two Millions of bales a crop that should have been Four Millions. Other crops suffered likewise, but the principal loss was on Cotton.

In the great corn-growing West, plowing, facturer.—Fisher. planting, and cultivating were likewise retarded by Spring and Summer rains, which were tollowed by an intense, protracted drouth, which reduced the Western staple by a full half. Wisconsin seems to have escaped this disaster, and there were doubtless other local exemptions; yet we are confident that not more than half a full crop of Indian Corn was harvested north of the Ohio and the Missouri. Hence, Pork and Beef are to-day dearer in our markets than they usually are or should be; hence the South is less bounteously supplied with Northern Corn than she has usually been. We believe the South grew more food in 1867 than in the average of the ten preceding years; but she has received far less from the West-in part because the yield was less abundant than usual, and in part because she was less able to pay. Hence, scarcity and need throughout considerable districts, especially those inundated in the Spring of '67. Hence, also, mercantile embaraassments, and a decided falling off both in the demand for fresh goods and in payments for those already purchased.

But the Old World has suffered far more intensely than the New. The failure of crops in 1867, especially in the northern provinces of Prussia, of Sweden, and it would seem of Russia also, was beyond modern precedent. Wheat Rye, Barley, and Oats, but especially the three latter, form the chief staples whereon the poor subsist; and these were all but destroyed throughout extensive districts by severe, untimely frosts. In Northern Sweden, the destruction was so complete that, coming, as it did, on the back of kindred disasters in the immediate past, it suggests a presumption that perhaps through the accumulation of ice in

A ST OF STREET

may have gradually become so inhospitable | \$2 70 \$60. as to be no longer inhabitable except for a slender population of roving hunters and \$2 to \$60. fishermen. It would be a striking commen- \$2 TO \$60. tary on the current dreams of human progress and terrestrial melioration if it should \$2 TO \$60. soon be found necessary to abandon to roving savages large districts that have for a thousand years subsisted millions of civil- \$12 TO \$50. ized, industrious, thrifty Christian people. \$12 70 \$50.
As yet, the data are too few and too new to \$12 70 \$50.
\$12 70 \$50. justify a positive conclusion. What is certain is, that regions equal in area to France must be supplied with food and seed by \$13 to \$45. charity, or their next Winter will be even harder and more fatal than the last. And, 413 TO \$45. thus far, their appeals for relief seem to have been very inadequately heeded and responded to, whether by governments or \$20 to \$60.

Algeria has never been prosperous under \$20 to \$60. French rule, though we might, perhaps, \$6 TO \$20. omit the qualification. The French have \$6 to \$20.

never been brilliantly successful as coloni\$6 to \$20. zers; and they seem to have even worse \$6 TO \$20. luck in their African conquest than elsewhere. Their rule is generally hated there; their industrial enterprises rarely prosper; \$7 re \$25. after nearly forty years' possession, they remain merely encamped in Algeria, as the \$7 ro \$25. \$7 ro \$25. Turks are said to be in Europe; and, although able easily to overbear resistance, they have hardly yet succeeded in softening | \$2 10 \$4. or limiting antipathy. The terrible famine now raging, and of which no mitigation seems to have, been effected, will doubtless intensify batred, though it can hardly impel it, in full view of the disparity of forces, to assume the active form of rebellion. Algeria will remain French; but she threatens to be even a more unprofitable, burdensome possession in the future than she has been in the past.

Must we conclude that Mother Earth is becoming niggard and grudging in her old aged that she rewards less bounteously the efforts of her children, and threatens to curtail their allowance? It surely seems remarkable that, in this age of increased efficiency and improved machinery, when the labor of each person employed converts more cotton or wool into serviceable fabrics in one day than it formerly did in ten, and when ingeniously contrived planters, tillers, mowers, reapers, threshers, &c., &c., have largely increased the yield of grain to the day's works, there should appear to be com-paratively less food produced than in past ages, when the plow was a forked stick, and the sickle cut our grain, at ten times the present cost. But our ingenious modern machinery enables us to exhaust the earth of fertility much faster than our fathers could, while human effort, to longer concentrated mainly on Agriculture, now woos success in a thousand diverse fields. Let us at least hope that the present famine is but transient—that there will soon be more workers of the fields, fewer idlers in the cities, and the sun of next September will ripen a bountiful, adequate harvest all over the globe.—N. Y. Tribune.

### SMALL FARMS IN EUROPE.

There is little in Holland, or Belgium, or Switzerland, or France, which a large English farmer would call good farming; there are no steam plows, few threshing machines, ast apparatus, which we fool We are just emerging from a remarkably ship suppose indispensable to good farming; but there is, in all these countries, a more soil, and there is also, that which should be the principal object in all farming-a larger amount of produce from the land, larger quantities of food for the people, which is obtained without exhausting the soil.

The impression which has grown upon my mind, as I have visited these various countries, is very like that which Jupiter addressed to the wagoner. If we want meat we must put our shoulder to the wheel and help ourselves. We must look for wealth from better tillage of our own soil. That which a people raises by its own tillage, is inherently cheaper than that which it imports. Those who grow corn and raise meat are the best consumers of the manu-

### MUTTON vs. PORK.

Physicians recommend mutton as the most wholesome meat, the easiest digested, and best suited to invalids; while pork, as every body knows, is the most unwholesome flesh eaten. In England, mutton is a favorite dish, and we apprehend it is to this, rather than roast beef, that the Englishman owes his robust health and rosy complexion. Our people eat too much pork and too little mutton. And yet, as a contemporary well remarks, "mutton can be produced pound for pound at less than half the price of pork; yields more nourishment when eaten: and keeping sheep does not exhaust a farm to the extent feeding hogs does. Sheep can be kept during the winter on hay and turnips, or mangel wurtzel, or sugar beet, while hogs will not do without at least some

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