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## ABOUT ALUMINIUM.

AN INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF ITS REMARKABLE PROPERTIES.

As Malleable as Gold or Silver and More Durable—Its Value in the Age of Electricity—Resistance to Corrosion—Stronger Than Steel.

Of course the reader readily understands that aluminium does not occur in nature in a metallic form, and the great secret is to isolate it from the substances with which it appears and reduce it to the metallic state. The word means the metal of clay. As a fact, however, clay soil comes from the metallic base, not the metal from the soil. Combined with oxygen, in one form or another, it forms mountain masses and is the base of a vast amount of common earth. By the action of air and water the aluminium compound is decomposed, the alkali washed away and clay soil is left. We have then to consider the surface of the siliceous earth as very largely the result of the decomposition of this metal, leaving a porous substance, which we cultivate and in which we grow our vegetable products. The compound forms of aluminium are far from uniform, and include mica, feldspar, porphyry, ruby, sapphire, garnet, turquoise, bauxite and corundum. The last two compounds are commonly those used in extracting the pure metal. But in America corundum, which is found in North Carolina, is and probably will be the main source of supply.

Of course the general reader, whatever his interest in this remarkable substance, will not understand the chemical processes of extraction. It is far more interesting to learn as much as possible of its physical properties. Its color is a beautiful silvery white, with a very slight bluish tinge. When cut it resembles a piece of the finest steel. It is as colorless and tasteless when absolutely pure. It is fully as malleable as gold and silver, and can be beaten into leaves that can be used as silver and gold leaf; and they are, however, far more durable. It can be drawn out into exceedingly fine wire. Its elasticity is that of silver, and its tenacity the same, but by hammering it becomes as hard as iron and as elastic. A bar three feet long and a quarter of an inch square, subjected to tests, was found to have a tensile strength of twelve tons to the square inch. Taking its strength in relation to its weight, it compares with steel of thirty-five tons per square inch tensile strength.

Aluminium is also remarkably sonorous; so that when a bar in suspension is struck it gives a sound of a crystal bell. It melts at a temperature higher than zinc and lower than silver, and is therefore to be ranked as easily fusible. At any temperature whatever it remains fixed; that is, it loses none of its weight. It conducts electricity with great facility—eight times better than iron and twice better than copper. It also ranks very high, better than copper and silver, as a conductor of heat. These facts suggest the possible and probable value of aluminium in the age of electricity—its value in connection with our new motor.

But still more remarkable are the properties of this metal in resisting corrosion. The air has no effect on it whatever, whether moist or dry; neither does sulphur fumes. Nor does pure oxygen affect it, whether cold or hot, although if brought into a white heat it burns, producing a strong light. Neither has water power to corrode it at any ordinary heat, but at 100 deg. it slowly decomposes the water. It is equally true that such destructive gases as sulphuretted hydrogen do not affect it; and the acids, such as sulphuric and nitric, do not affect aluminium to any perceptible degree, and hydrochloric acid acts very slowly on the pure metal. This is why it was used for the peak of the Washington monument, being incorrodible practically where other metals would be eaten up by the atmosphere and rains.

**CORRODED BY ALKALIES.**  
But alkalies, on the contrary, as potash, soda and lime, act on aluminium very easily, driving off the hydrogen and leaving a calcium or other compound. So, also, chlorine, iodine, bromine and fluorine attack the metal at once and break it up rapidly. Its power to resist acids makes it exceedingly useful in diseases where tubes of metal must be used, since sweat and purulent matter cannot alter it.  
Such is the nature of this metal of the future, sketched as well as may be without using technical language. The world contains a thousand times as much of it as it does of iron. Its strength surpasses both iron and steel, while it is almost absolutely incorrodible. Glass, acids, air and water do not tarnish it; nor does heat change its weight or color. It is the best known conductor of heat and electricity. It is lighter than some of our hardest woods, and is worked with great ease. In the words of a leading scientist: "It is the lightest, easiest worked, strongest, most durable and generally most valuable of all metals; and the man who invents a method of making it cheaply will revolutionize the industry." It is not easy to limit the universal and sweeping influence of the introduction of two such metals as aluminium and malleable glass into our industrial economy in a single generation.—Globe-Democrat.

A Globe of Obesity.  
M. de Blowitz, Paris correspondent of The London Times, whose recent announcement of a Russo-German alliance against France and Austria has been attracting the notice of all Europe, is a remarkable individual. In personal appearance he is a mere globe of obesity. From pole to pole, or rather from poll to sole, he measures about five feet three inches, with an equatorial abdominal diameter of something like four feet six inches. His age is apparently in the neighborhood of 50. His oral English is very imperfect. He constantly drops into French by way of refuge from the intricacies of the Anglo-Saxon tongue, and is apparently more familiar with German than with either. He is by birth a Pole. Though he writes English more fluently than he speaks it, most of his matter is "corrected for style" by a competent subordinate. All his manuscript, even to notes of invitation and reply, is turned off upon an American typewriter. He lives in a small entresol, or first flight flat, of which the only other occupants besides the servants are his wife and a very fat poodle, decrepit with age. Consumed with inordinate vanity is M. de Blowitz, no possible flatterer upon his secret pro as a mover of states and empires being too gross for his ears. His value is estimated by The Times upon a pecuniary basis of \$12,000 annually, with a coupe at his disposal and a liberal allowance for expenses.—The Argonaut.

OF THE Stage.  
When Mr. Joseph Jefferson was camped out last summer one of his mates asked him to recite a certain scene from "Rip Van Winkle"; but the actor declined, saying that he could not repeat any long passage from his parts away from the theatre.—The Argonaut.  
A Cultivated Taste.  
Young Hostess—I must show you my baby, Mr. Brown; are you fond of them?  
Brown (abstent minded)—Yes—oh, yes! But I haven't seen any lately.

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