

A cable, made partly of steel and bamboo rope or of bamboo rope, has a bamboo tube, about 130 feet long, attached to the end. The cable is uncoiled and wound up, either by machinery, as in the bigger mines, or by relays of buffaloes, as in the smaller mines. When the bamboo tube reaches the bottom the pressure opens a valve and fills the tube with brine and water and closes the valve when the tube is full. It takes two or three minutes to lower the tube by machinery and three or four minutes to pull it up again. When up, a man pulls it across over a bucket, presses on the valve with a hook, and releases the salt water which pours out into a big bucket. From this it runs along bamboo tubing to the boiling office, which may be 4 or 5 miles away. In the office the salt is boiled in salt-pans either by coal (which is quicker) or by gas found on the spot (which is cheaper). The salt comes out yellow, but it is then washed with water containing some chemicals and it comes out a beautiful white. If it is to be used in the crystal state it is then packed in bags of about 350 lb. and sent off by barge. If it is required in cakes it has to be boiled several times, and is mixed with ashes to give it a darker colour.

Kungching, a few miles farther on, is another important centre for salt.

On July 4 at San-ch'ing-chen two English lady missionaries bound for Mount Omei lunched at Pereira's inn—the first time in all his travels that he had ever met a strange party in an inn.

Two days later he reached Omei-hsien on the foot-hills of Mount Omei, which was hidden in