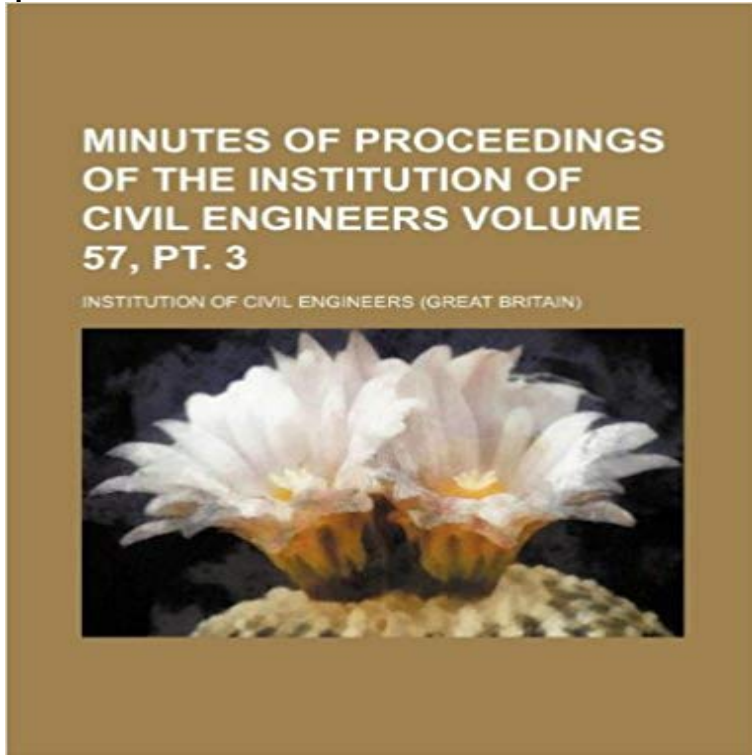


# Minutes of proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers Volume 57, pt. 3



This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1879 Excerpt: ... Papers relating to Indian irrigation in the Proceedings,<sup>1</sup> some apology is needed for any remarks in reference to the smaller of the two countries. Three different methods of obtaining water for irrigation are practised in the Island: 1st. Raising it by manual labour from wells and ponds; 2nd. Collecting it in tanks fed by the drainage of the neighbourhood; and 3rd. Tapping the mountain streams and torrents. The first of these is adopted in the small densely-peopled district at the extreme north of the island, known as the Jaffna Peninsula, and in a few other places where the country is so uniformly flat as to present no site for tanks of the ordinary Indian type, and where there is no river or other natural source of fresh-water supply but the direct one of the periodical rains. Garden cultivation is, however, the only one to which the system of irrigation from wells is applicable; because it alone is sufficiently profitable to pay for the labour involved, and because less water is required for it than for the cultivation of rice. Rice is certainly grown in the district. but to a very small extent, and only where the lands are unfit for other purposes; for, a successful rice harvest there depends upon the rainfall, which is very uncertain, and upon the ponds, which often fail, but which when full yield a supply; of water in aid of the rains. The water is raised from these ponds by a scoop swung from a rude scaffolding, and worked by two, four, or six men. The country lies at a level generally less than 10 feet above the sea. The wells are sunk to a depth of 15 or 20 feet through the magnesian limestone, which almost every where underlies the soil within 2 or 3 feet of the surface; and,

except for a few days in the year when heavy rain falls, they are suppl...

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