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Improved Stone-lifting Machine.

The power-exerting machines which have recently been introduced into farming operations, are among the most useful and convenient assistants the agriculturist can have. Through them a great deal of labor is saved, and the work accomplished much more speedily.

The engraving which we publish herewith represents a powerfully-gearred machine designed for raising stones, pulling stumps, loading heavy timber or logs on to sleds, or any other purpose that requires a great power, which can be easily managed by ordinary laborers. The machine consists of a very strong frame, A, mounted on wheels; this frame is surmounted by another wooden structure, B, which carries a system of gearing upon it. This gearing is so arranged that the handles, C, when turned, transmit a slow rotary motion to the axle or windlass, D, upon which the chain is wound. These chains connect to a shorter one which is fastened to the stone to be raised by two hooks, E. There are holes in the side of the stone, about half an inch deep, which have been drilled to receive the hooks in question, and when the latter are inserted and power applied to the winch handles, the stone is raised from its bed and may be carried to any point and deposited; there is to be a pawl (not shown in the engraving) working in the large wheel to prevent it from turning back when the load is hanging on the main chains. There is also a disconnecting clutch at F, by which one of the gears may be thrown out if necessary. The frame of the machine is strongly clamped to stand the severe strain it has to bear, and by having but two wheels it turns easier and has a clear space beneath in which the stone may hang while being conveyed to other parts of the field. Two men can raise a great weight with this system of gearing, and the efficiency of it is of course much increased when the number of assistants is doubled.

The above machine was invented by R. T. Hathaway, of New Bedford, Mass., and for further information address him at that place.

The Expansive Force of Gunpowder.

An interesting experiment was made lately at Bridesburg, Pa., arsenal, under the supervision of Major Laidley, commanding, to ascertain whether a building for the filling or manufacture of cartridges could be constructed of an iron frame with wooden sides and tin roof, and if, in case of an explosion, the iron frame-work would remain standing. An iron framed building, with wooden sides and tin roof, twenty-three and a half feet square and sixteen feet in height, was erected in the extreme end of the ar-

senal grounds, on the Delaware river. The wood-work upon the building was so constructed that the sides, by a heavy pressure, could be forced from the iron frame; from the outside they could not be pushed in by any force. In the building were six tables, each table containing about four boxes of cartridges. The ends of the cartridges pointing upwards were open. Boxes of powder were also on the tables. They were arranged the same as in a factory when the men are

boiler; the thinness of the iron was caused by corrosion; all the other iron examined seemed to be in a good condition. The "mystery" in this case, as in almost every other, was a simple deterioration of the drum from neglect, or rather the effect of time.

Large Mass of Copper.

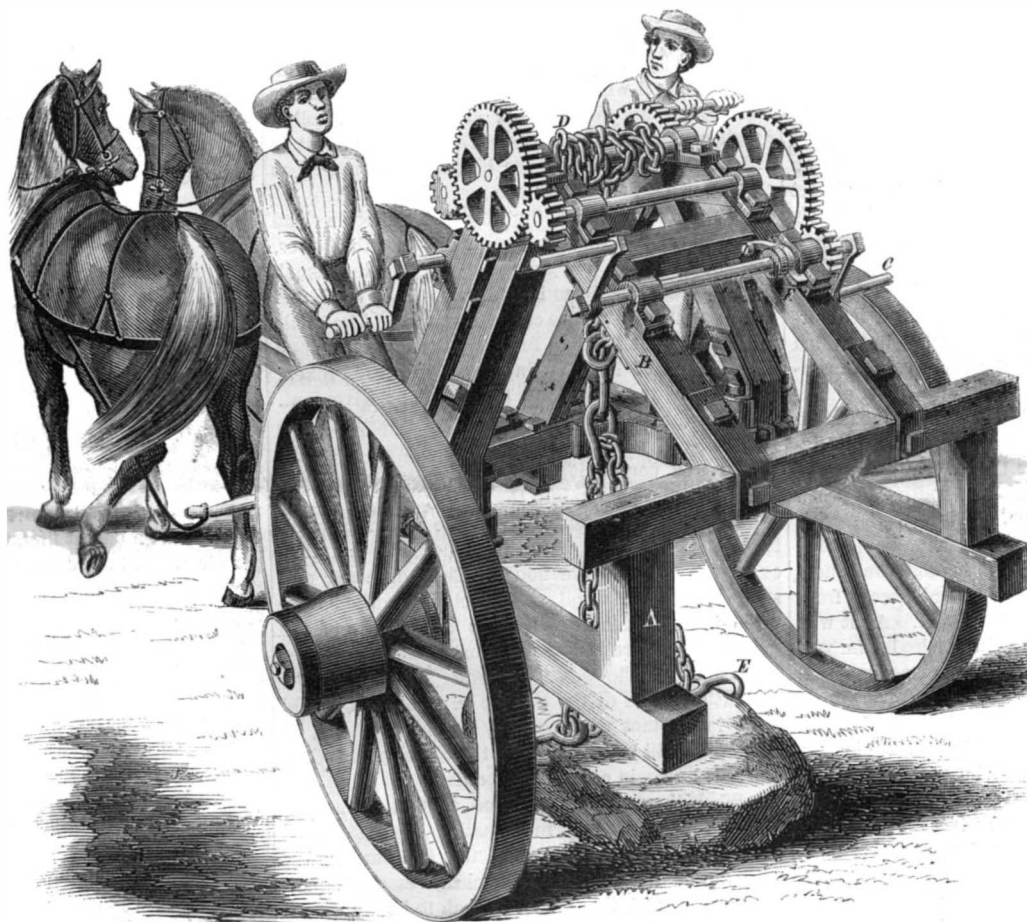
Mr. J. B. Townsend, agent of the Minnesota Mine, has communicated the following facts regarding the large mass of copper found in 1857:—"The 'great mass' of the Minnesota Mine was discovered in February, 1857, between the adit and ten fathom level, or about 120 feet below the surface. It was imbedded in the belt of conglomerate which forms the foot-wall of the Minnesota vein. Previous to its discovery the regular vein at the junction of the trap and conglomerate had been removed. The foot-wall of the vein, at the place where the great mass was found, was perfect and regular as in other cases; the lode was also rich in mass copper. The great mass was discovered only by small strings or pieces of copper extending into the conglomerate. The mass itself was 45 feet in length, about 22 feet at the greatest width, and the thickest part was more than 8 feet. It was over 90 per cent copper, and weighed about 420 tons. It required 13 months to complete the cutting up and sending it to the surface. Some 30 men were employed in cutting at a time. Several heavy blasts were necessary to loosen the mass

from its bed. At the last blast or charge, 30 kegs of powder (750 lbs.) were used. The whole amount of powder consumed in the various trials was 95 kegs (2,375 lbs.) The principal features of this mass, of more than ordinary interest, were its great weight in one solid body, its remarkable purity, and its occurring outside of the regular vein in the conglomerate rock."

American Steamboat Engines and Models in England.

We find in a foreign contemporary the following paragraph respecting the adoption of plans of our steam vessels in England:—

"The first of two large steamers, intended for the passenger trade between Quebec and Montreal, is now in course of construction by Messrs. Barclay, Curle & Co., in their yard at Stobcross. They are being built from a fine New York model, and the work upon the first of them, the *Quebec*, is now in a forward state. Her dimensions are—Length of keel, 285 feet; breadth of iron hull, 34 feet; and 11 feet depth of hold. The decks are to project over the sides of the hull, and will be 60 feet across. On the main deck there will be a large and beautifully fitted



HATHAWAY'S STONE-LIFTING MACHINE.

in the act of filling the cartridges. A galvanic battery was stationed at a distance from the building, and copper wires were run along on small poles and through one of the windows of the building, and thence into a powder box. Two of the sides of the building were torn from the iron, and thrown down. One was left remaining and the other partly down. The roof was lifted off and thrown a short distance. The boxes in the building contained eleven thousand five hundred cartridges and two barrels of powder.

The "Mystery" of a Boiler Explosion.

At a recent examination of a witness before a Coroner at Philadelphia, some "mysterious" circumstances, in connection with a steam boiler explosion were brought to light. The witness, Algernon Roberts, testified that he had examined portions of the exploded boilers at Messrs. Cornelius & Baker's Columbia-avenue factory, also at Morgan & Orr's establishment; the iron at Morgan & Orr's appeared to be in good condition. The witness exhibited a piece of iron from the exploded mud drum, which upon measurement proved to be about an eighth of an inch thick. To the mind of the witness that was a sufficient cause for the accident in that part of the

up ladies' cabin, offices, luggage rooms, engine room, &c. Above the main deck there will be another deck, also 60 feet broad, extending the whole length of the vessel. This upper deck is to be devoted entirely to cabin passengers. The engine to propel the vessel is to be a single cylinder beam engine. The cylinder is to be 60-inch diameter, and 11 feet stroke, and will be supplied with steam at 45 lbs. pressure from two boilers. The paddle wheels will be 32 feet diameter, with floats 10 feet broad. The engine will work up to 1,500 horse-power, and is expected to propel the boat at a speed of twenty miles an hour. The other boat to be laid on after the *Quebec* will be the same in all respects. Each these steamers, with all on board, will draw only about 5 feet of water. They are being built under the superintendence of Mr. William Inglis, a Canadian engineer, now settled in Edinburgh. When the *Quebec* is finished she will be taken asunder, packed up, and shipped to Canada.

Wrought-iron Fort for Russia.

The Russian Government is about to erect a fort at Cronstadt, which is to be heavily plated with wrought-iron slabs, 15 inches square. The process of rolling these bars is thus described by the *London Engineer*:—"The bars rolled on Saturday, however, were an advance again upon what has been hitherto done, and the result was looked forward to with some doubt, for each bar, when delivered, was to weigh six tons, to be 15 inches square, to be tongued and grooved in the rolling, and to be perfect in its soundness throughout. The furnaces were opened at three o'clock, and the immense mass of metal was drawn forth on to an iron truck, heated to a brilliancy that was almost blinding in its intense whiteness, and instantly changing the temperature of the vast factory to a scorching sulphurous heat that was insupportable. Directly it was out, workmen, shielding their faces as they best could, swept the impurities from its surface with long brooms soaked in water, but which nevertheless lit like tow the instant they came in contact with the iron, which was sparkling like a gigantic firework. It was then let down the incline to where the rollers, turned by one of the largest fly-wheels in the kingdom—more than 100 tons weight and nearly 40 feet in diameter—was waiting to crush the mass into its required form. This was the critical moment; for an instant or two the rollers failed to grip it, but at last they caught it, and the whole machinery moved slower, as amid loud cheers from the workmen they began to wind it in. As it was slowly crushed through, the refuse melted iron was squirted out in all directions, and as the mass emerged from the rollers on the other side it lit up everything with a bright lambent flame, said to be caused by the pressure to which the bar was subjected. This was only the first roll, but it had to be passed through three times to reduce it to the proper thickness. It was not, however, as in the case of ordinary armor-plates, a mere question of reduction, as these bars have to be rolled, tongued, and grooved to fit into each other. Thus in the rolling they have to overcome all the peculiar difficulties of their construction almost in two operations, which must be done while the metal is in a half melted state, or the whole is spoilt. The bars, as we have said, are fifteen inches square, but each of these presents a most difficult section. In the first place, the lower part of the bar has a projecting rib, and in the upper part is a groove, corresponding in size with the rib on the lower half, so that the projection of one bar may fit into the groove of the one beneath, thus making a solid dovetailed wall of iron. Beyond these, also, is a rib at the back of the bar, formed to dovetail again into projecting masses of iron in the rear supports of the fort, and in the process of rolling all these departures from a plane and smooth surface have to be formed, and to be formed with so much accuracy that each part fits into the other without the necessity of any machine planing of surfaces. To give to the mass of metal the required section the rollers of the mill are grooved where the raised surface is required, and sunk to produce the projecting ribs. It took three rolls on Saturday before all was finished, and at the completion of each the workmen, who seemed intensely interested in the success of the experiment, cheered loudly. The last operation was effected by lifting the bar into a bed, so to speak, made between two masses of iron, and then passing over it an

enormous iron roller, which removed the curved form the bar had received in passing between the rollers. Now that the success of the first bar has been achieved, the rolling of the others will go on every day until the whole order is completed. When the fort is erected in Russia it is intended to test its powers of resistance with a gun throwing a shot of a thousand pounds weight, which is in a short time to be cast in Prussia for the Imperial Government. In the caliber of its ordnance Russia seems making a great effort to keep ahead of the rest of Europe, and is most liberal in its orders for the largest guns in any country which will undertake to manufacture for it. But in the caliber of its ordnance Europe is now, as it ever has been, far behind America. At Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania, a 50-ton gun has just been successfully cast for the United States Government. This monster piece of ordnance, which is stated to be perfect in its casting, is to throw a solid 20-inch shot weighing 1,600 lbs."

How to obtain Neat's Foot Oil.

A writer in the *Country Gentleman* thus describes the process of making this oil:—

"The process of obtaining this kind of oil is very simple, and many farmers often throw away enough feet annually to furnish oil sufficient to keep all their harness, shoes, and leather machine belts in the best condition. By breaking a bone of the leg of a fat bullock or cow, it will be found full of an oily substance which often appears as rich and edible as a roll of excellent butter. This is neat's foot oil, and it is sometimes surprising to see how much a single foot and leg will yield when it is properly treated.

"In order to extract the oil, wash the hoofs clean—then break up the shin bones, the finer the better, and cut the hoofs and bones of the feet into small pieces. Then put them in a kettle of any kind, and pour in water enough to cover the bones. The kettle should never be filled so full that the water will boil over the top of it. The finer the bones are broken, or cut, or sawed, the sooner the oil will be driven out. Now, let the kettle be covered as tightly with a lid as it can be conveniently, and boil the bones thoroughly all day. Of course, it will be understood that more water must be poured into the kettle as it evaporates.

"The object of covering the kettle with a close lid, is to retain the heat as much as possible, and thus expel the oil from the bones. The hot water and steam will liquify the oil and expel it from the bones, when it will immediately rise to the surface of the water. Therefore it is very important that the water should not be allowed to evaporate so low that the oil that has risen to the surface of the water should come in contact with the dry hoofs and bones, as much of it will be absorbed by them, and will be lost unless it be again expelled by boiling.

"When there appears to be oil enough on the surface of the water, pour in a pailful or two of cold water to stop the boiling, or let the fire burn down. Now dip off the oil into some clean vessel, and boil them again until there is oil enough to be dipped off again. The oil that is obtained by the first boiling is purer than that which is obtained at the second or third boiling.

"There will be some water among the oil which must be evaporated; therefore, put the oil in a clean kettle and heat it just hot enough to evaporate the water, and the oil will be ready for use. Great care must be exercised in heating the oil, so as not to burn it. As soon as the oil begins to simmer a little, the oil may be removed from the fire, as the water has evaporated. Water in oil, heated to the boiling point, will be converted into steam almost instantaneously, as may be seen by allowing a few drops to fall into boiling oil or hot lard. [This occurs from the difference of temperature at the boiling point of the two liquids, that of linseed oil being 597°.—EDS.] Let the oil be kept in a jug corked tightly, and it will be ready for use at any time for years to come. In very cold weather, however, it will require a little warming before using it."

IK MARVEL says:—"I have no faith in cats; they are a cold-blooded race; they are the politicians among domestic animals; they care little who is master, or what are the overturnings, so their pickings are secure; and what are their midnight caucusses but primary meetings?"

Useful Receipts.

We find in the *American Druggists' Circular* a number of practical receipts which may be useful to our readers:—

TO BLEACH GUTTA-PERCHA.—Dissolve gutta-percha (one part) in 20 parts of hot benzole, shake the solution with one-tenth part of freshly-calced plaster, and set aside, with occasional agitation, for two days. The clear pale brownish-yellow liquid is then decanted into another vessel containing double its bulk of alcohol fortius, when the gutta will be precipitated in the form of a brilliantly white tenacious mass, which is pounded together in a mortar, and rolled into cylindrical sticks.

SCARLET COLOR ON WOODEN FIGURES.—Boil a little of best carmine with distilled water for four or five minutes in a glass or porcelain vessel, then add gradually some aq. ammoniæ, boil a little longer, then cool. The wood must be left immersed in this liquor for some time.

BLACK VARNISH FOR FLEXIBLE SURFACES.—Take of asphaltum, in coarse powder, 24 ounces, macerate in a flask for a day or two, with frequent shaking, in 21 fluid ounces of benzine. Decant the clear solution, and mix it with that of one or two ounces of manilla elemi, and one ounce of balsam copaiba in sufficient benzine; if necessary add more benzine to get the proper consistence.

TO POWDER CAMPHOR AND GUM RESINS.—A writer in the *Schweizerische Wochenschrift fur Pharmacie* recommends instead of the usual method with alcohol, to reduce the camphor to powder by means of an ordinary kitchen grater and separate the finest powder by sifting. The coarse pieces may be used for some other purpose. We are inclined to think that powder prepared by this method will keep better than when it has been in contact with a liquid. To obtain gum resins in powder, often a very difficult task, the same writer directs that they be triturated with a few drops of sweet oil of almonds.

OBSTINATE CONSTIPATION.—M. Homolle has found the following powder efficacious in two cases, where obstinate constipation had raised the question of operation for artificial anus: powdered strychnine, one-fiftieth of a grain; powdered nux vomica, one-fifth of a grain; calcined magnesia, six grains; mix. One powder a day at first, then two, and finally three, per diem. In both cases the bowels were moved, and the symptoms of suspected internal strangulation disappeared.

GENUINE COLOGNE WATER.—One of the Farinas has published the following formula for this celebrated perfume, which we copy from the *Zeitschrift des Norddeutschen Apotheker-Vereins*:—

R Benzoini (purified) 2 ounces	} by weight.
Ol. Lavandulæ 4 "	
Ol. Rosmarini 2 "	

Alcoholis fortioris 9 gallons. To this solution are added successively:

- Ol. Neroli,
- Ol. Neroli petits grains,
- Ol. Limonis, of each 10 2-5 ounces,
- Ol. Aurantii Dulcis,
- Ol. Limettæ,
- Ol. Bergamii, of each 20 4-5 ounces,

Tinct. Flor. geranii rosei q. s. Macerate for some weeks, then fill into flasks.

AN ASTUTE OFFICIAL.—A quantity of lupine seed—found very useful in Prussia for forage and for green manuring upon sandy soils—was lately ordered from Europe by the Commissioner of Agriculture. The time for its reception has elapsed—but no lupine! A note of explanation is received. The appraiser of customs at New York, watchful against smuggling or nominal duties, had been spending three weeks analyzing the "lupines" (which were addressed to the Agricultural Department in due form) to see if they did not contain the essence of the famous "Lubin's Extract."

GUTTA-PERCHA is now used to protect the feet of horses from tenderness and slipping. It is first cut into small pieces and softened with hot water, then mixed with half its weight of powdered sal ammoniac, and the mixture melted in a tinned saucepan over a gentle fire, keeping it well stirred. When required for use, melt in a glue pot, scrape the hoof clean, and apply the mixture with a knife.

THE NEW PLANET.

Since the brief paragraph was in type announcing the discovery of a new planet, we have received Mr. Beswick's computation of its elements:—

Epoch, February 12, 1864.	
Distance.....	0.4053
Longitude of node.....	321° 48'
Inclination.....	10.77°
Period in days.....	94.1326
Daily motion.....	3.82439°
Apparent diameter.....	8"
Mass (Earth—1.00).....	0.11

Mr. Beswick saw this planet cross the sun's disk on February 12, 1864, at 8h. 20m. in the morning. It was then 10' 20" from the eastern limb, and 14' 20" from the southern limb of the sun. Its motion was exactly 711".66 in 100 minutes.

The whole time of transit was exactly 4 hours 33.5 minutes. The segment of the sun's disk which the apparent path of the body cut off was a complete diameter.

Its progress across the sun's face exceeded that of Venus and was less than that of Mercury. Its figure was that of a dark, round, and well-defined spot. Its size was 8", or a little less than that of Mercury at its greatest diameter. Indeed the whole appearance—figure, density, velocity and regularity of motion—was indicative of its being the transit of a planetary body whose path is included between the orbits of Mercury and Venus.

Mr. Beswick cites six previous observations by astronomers of the transit of a dark body across the sun's disk, which correspond exactly with the periods of this planet as computed by him:—

"The first recorded transit of an unknown body is that of Lescarbault, who saw a round body transit the sun's disk on March 26, 1859, at about four o'clock in the afternoon. He and Leverrier computed its orbit, and announced it as an inter-Mercurial planet, whose period is less than twenty days, and its distance about 0.1427. And Leverrier has given to this planet the name of Vulcan. But the planet's place is unknown, as it has never been seen since.

"Now, in computing back the times of inferior transit of the body seen by me February 12, 1864, I find that it would transit the same on the very day and hour when Lescarbault saw a body cross the sun's disk. For between February 12, 1864, and March 26, 1859, there are exactly 14 inferior transits, or

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} 1784.9 \text{ days.} \\ 14 \text{ transits.} \end{array} \right\} = 126.817 \text{ days.}$$

So that the planet seen by Lescarbault in France, and named Vulcan by Leverrier, is doubtless the same planet as the one whose orbit I have computed, and which was seen by me in 1864. But its distance from the sun is 0.4053 instead of 0.1427, or nearly three times as distant as Leverrier supposed it to be; and its path, which lies between Mercury and Venus, instead of Mercury and the Sun, is 94.1326 days instead of less than 20 days, or nearly five times as great as Leverrier supposed it to be."

The next observation in going back was that of Schmidt, October 11, 1847, the interval being exactly equal to 33 inferior transits. The next was by both Stark and Steinhilber, June 20, 1820, the interval being just 80 transits. It was seen by Stark at the next earlier transit than that of June 20, 1820, on the 9th of October 1819. Fritsch saw an unknown body transit the sun on the 10th of October 1802, and this interval proves to be equal to exactly 49 transits. Finally the earliest known mention of this body was by Schentan and Crefeld on the 6th of June, 1764; 111 transits earlier than that observed by Fritsch.

Mr. Beswick gives the position of this planet on the following dates, so that observers will know where to look for it.

Right Ascension.			Declination. S.			
h.	m.	deg.	deg.	m.	sec.	
May 5.....	12	59	34.788	6	39	00.000
6.....	13	10	48.492	59	22.926	
7.....		22	02.116	7	19	45.852
8.....		33	15.820	40	08.778	
9.....		44	29.524	8	00	31.704
10.....		55	43.228	20	54.630	
11.....	14	6	56.932	41	17.556	
12.....		18	10.636	9	01	40.482
13.....		29	24.340	22	03.498	
14.....		40	38.044	42	26.334	
15.....		51	51.748	10	02	49.160
16.....	15	3	05.452	23	12.086	
17.....		14	19.156	43	35.012	
18.....		25	32.860	28	27.064	
19.....		36	46.564	10	8	04.138
20.....		48	00.268	9	47	41.212

A circle whose radius is 15°, with the sun as a center, will include the position of this planet up to May 10th. And during its Eastern elongation, which will continue to May 17, it is possible that the planet may show a phase distinct enough to be visible just before sunrise, to a good observer with a good instrument. Its next inferior transit across the sun's disk will be early in the morning of June 18, 1864.

About Whitewashing.

The time for cleaning and fixing up has come, and one of the most important items is whitewashing. We often wonder that people do not do more at this. How much neater and more cheerful a whole place looks, if a few hours are spent in whitewashing the fence, the outhouses, the cellars, &c.; it changes the whole appearance of the homestead. One day's work thus expended will often make a place twice as attractive and add hundreds of dollars to its saleable valuation. Whitewashing a cellar with lime not only makes it lighter and neater, but more healthful, also. For cellars, a simple mixture of fresh slacked lime is best. For house rooms, the common "Paris-white," to be bought cheaply, is very good. We take for each two pounds of whiting, an ounce of the best transparent glue, cover it with cold water over night, and in the morning simmer it carefully without scorching, until dissolved. The Paris-white is then put in hot water, and the dissolved glue stirred in, with hot water enough to fit it for applying to the walls and ceilings. This makes a very fine white, so firm that it will not rub off at all. When common fresh-slaked lime is used, some recommend adding to each 2½ gallons (a pailful), two tablespoonfuls of salt and half a pint of boiled linseed oil, stirred in well while the mixture is hot. This is recommended for out-door and in-door work. For an out-door white-wash, we have used the following with much satisfaction: Take a tub, put in a peck of lime and plenty of water to slack it. When hot with slaking, stir in thoroughly about half a pound of tallow or other grease, and mix it well in. Then add hot water enough for use. The compound will withstand rain for years.—*American Agriculturist.*

Spectral Ray of Thallium Paralysed by that of Sodium.

It appears that if thallium be present in small proportions in a compound containing chloride of sodium, the action of the ray characteristic of the latter is so powerful that the thallic ray remains unperceived. Hence, although the thallic ray be not observed in the solar spectrum, it by no means follows that the metal itself does not exist in the sun. This is a fact of great importance, not only in regard to ordinary chemistry, but as it bears on toxicology. For in an analysis (spectral) of the animal tissues or liquids, one is certain to find chloride of sodium in abundance, and therefore, were thallium present in small proportions, it would escape detection by this method. If it be required to examine mineral waters and such-like for thallium, it will be necessary to separate the metal in the first instance from the excess of soda; this may be done by one of the methods pointed out by M. Lamy; viz., either by depositing it on zinc, or reducing it by galvanic means, or by precipitating it with sulphide of ammonium or iodide of potassium.—[See a memoir of M. Nickles in the *Comptes Rendus* for January, 1864.

Chemistry of the Oil of Nutmeg.

The nutmeg owes its peculiar aromatic properties and flavor to a volatile oil which is present in large quantities, but up to this it has not been submitted to a chemical examination. This oil may be extracted by boiling the kernel in an ordinary retort, but in this process only a portion of the essence is obtained. A preferable method appears to be the treatment of the finely-powdered nutmeg with bisulphide of carbon or sulphuric acid. The mixture is then filtered, and a stream of vapor is caused to play upon the residue, which then loses all the essence it contained. The composition of the essence obtained in this manner is the same as that of volatile oil of turpentine.

The stock of sugar in the British warehouses has been rapidly increasing for the last three years, and is greater now than it ever was before.

Direct Production of Wrought Iron and Steel in the Blast Furnace.

A very interesting method for obtaining the above result has recently been patented by Mr. Johnson, of Lincoln's Inn Fields, England. The process consists essentially in the introduction of finely divided oxide of iron into the blast, which, of course, conveys it to the metal in the furnace. The result of this introduction of oxide is that the cast iron becomes decarbonated in the blast-furnace itself, without being placed in puddling or other furnaces. Any other oxide which acts in a similar manner may be employed with equal advantage, and other substances may be employed for the purpose of purifying the metal. The crucibles which are usually employed must undergo some modification in order to admit of the patented system being carried into execution. It is thought advisable to heat the oxide to dull redness before allowing it to enter the blast pipe.

Newly-discovered Bone Cave.

The *Popular Science Review* says:—"In making certain excavations in the rock of Gibraltar, the engineers have come upon a very extensive cavern containing the bones of numerous extinct mammalia and of man. From what we have already heard, this grotto bids fair to throw more light upon the question of the age of pre-historic man than any hitherto examined. As yet we have had no minute description of the fossils discovered in this locality, but we have been informed that a very great number of specimens has been forwarded to this country by one of the Gibraltar authorities particularly interested in the geology of the excavation."

A WOMAN WITH HORNS.—The *New York Observer* of the 12th inst., contains a letter from its correspondent at Larnaca, in the Island of Cyprus (Turkish dominions), describes a most remarkable *lusus naturae* recently discovered there. It is nothing less than a woman with horns growing out of her head! She has one large horn on the side of her head of the size and consistency of an ordinary ram's horn, besides three or four cornicles on other parts of the head. The writer states that he has seen her and that she has been visited by nearly all the Consuls and Europeans in that place, some of whom are making an effort to secure her for exhibition.

SPONTANEOUS GENERATION.—There is at last a prospect of the question of *equivocal generation* being settled. We learn, from the *Comptes Rendus*, that the Academy has appointed a commission to inquire into the evidence on both sides, and that M. Pasteur and Messrs. Pouchet, Jolly, and Musset have been invited to repeat their experiments in the presence of the commissioners. The invitation has been accepted by both parties, the advocates of spontaneous generation appearing to be quite sanguine of success, and reposing the most perfect confidence in the impartiality of the commission.

STAR MAPS.—The magnificent catalogue and star maps of Professor Argelander are now completed—the number of stars registered amounting to 324,198 altogether, which are visible in the northern hemisphere with a telescope of 4½ foot focus. The preparation of this great work has taken upwards of seven years, in which there were 635 clear nights, and the number of observations amounted to more than a million. The month of October was found to be best adapted for observations in the climate of Bonn, Germany.

VERDICT ON THE "CHENANGO" DISASTER.—In the *Chenango* disaster the verdict of the jury was that the boiler exploded through defective bracing. Just half the number of supports for the brace-rods, required by the specification, were put in the boiler, and the Government inspector is censured for neglecting to inform his superior officers of the departure from the contract. A minority report was also brought in by some of the jury, who agreed to consider the explosion as caused by superheated steam.

In the afternoon of the bloody day of Waterloo, as Wellington threw himself into one of the hollow squares of infantry, he observed to the officers, "This is hard pounding, gentlemen, but we will pound the longest." Again he remarked, "Three times I have saved this day by perseverance."

THE MONITOR TURRETS.

We have no desire to enter into a controversy with our trans-Atlantic contemporary, the *Mechanics' Magazine*, upon the respective merits of Captain Coles's turrets and Captain Ericsson's turrets; time has proved, and will still further prove, that what we have said about our vessels is fully sustained by their merits, and our article published on page 201 of the current volume of the *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*, commenting upon the two kinds of vessels, was called forth by the production in the *Mechanics' Magazine* of elaborate and extensive engravings of the two turrets—Coles's and Ericsson's—in such a manifestly unfair manner that we could not pass them without comment. The *Artizan*, another English journal, has since published a series of engravings, purporting to be representations of the monitor turrets, or United States floating batteries, and we also commented upon them, as we felt it our duty. Since the drawings in the *Artizan* are so widely different from those in the *Mechanics' Magazine*, surely the editor of the latter will see that our criticisms and strictures were not unjust. If these drawings represent the knowledge the English possess of our turrets so much the better for us, and the worse for them. It is unreasonable to publish such abortions, to father them upon Americans as the inventors of them, and then expect us to hold our peace.

In regard to the endurance of the monitors, let us examine the facts and leave speculation for awhile. The monitor *Montauk* has been struck 214 times with 9 and 10-inch shot at close range, and the *Weehawken*, before she sunk, 187 times, almost entirely by 10-inch shot. Now the former vessel is as good to-day as she ever was, notwithstanding this tremendous pounding, and can go anywhere under fire. The turrets of these ships are made wholly of the despised thin plates, built up in sections, which, when damaged, are easily removed and replaced, and the tests they have withstood prove them worthy of confidence. "But," says the *Mechanics' Magazine*, in another paragraph, "if our engravings are wrong why does not the *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN* present correct ones?" There are good reasons for our declining this proposition, which will be apparent on reflection.

The *Mechanics' Magazine* exposes the source from whence it derives its knowledge of the monitors by referring to the official report after the engagement of April 19th, 1863; it is not the only journal, at home or abroad, that has been deceived by it. If the editor had reflected a moment he would have discovered that the defects he criticizes and publishes engravings of, were those discovered in new ships immediately after the engagement, and did not refer to the condition of the turrets and the ships the next morning, or ten hours thereafter. This fact was stated in our first article, and it strikes us as singular that the editor overlooked it. The difficulty experienced by the pilots in the turret—in obtaining a clear view ahead—was solely the result of the suggestions made to Captain Ericsson by naval officers. These persons thought that a simple round hole in the pilot-house wall, deeply flaring or counter-sunk inwards, would afford sufficient range of vision. This idea was proved to be an erroneous one, and the plan adopted on the first monitor is in use in all, and a range of 120° of the horizon is now obtained through one sight-hole; there are five in all, we believe, in the pilot house, and the view of the vicinity is almost unlimited. The broken bolts we referred to in our previous article, and accounted for the solitary disaster which occurred from them; not the slightest trouble has since been felt from them. Why does our contemporary quote the report to prove us wrong? The heavy wrought-iron ring which shields the base of the turret and the pilot-house and prevents broken shot from entering between it and the deck, was not mentioned in the reports previously referred to, for very good reasons—doubtless somewhat similar in character to these which prompted the officers to find all the fault they could, but to refrain from expressing any favorable opinion of the monitors, or of any iron-clad built on their plans. Shot might be heaped to the muzzle of the guns without interfering with the rotation of the Ericsson turret.

Our contemporary seems to have rather confused ideas in respect to laminated armor and its application to the defense of ships. He ascribes more

knowledge on the subject to us than combined Europe possesses, and asks somewhat superfluously, "What on earth have our armor-plate committees been about all this time?" As this question may be asked in future, we leave it for time alone to answer, but we beg permission to call the attention of our foreign contemporary to the reports of the experiments at Shoeburyness, which have been published from time to time in his own journal. Does he not read therein that the thick armor plates have been repeatedly smashed, cracked, and penetrated? Have they ever stood against heavy shot in cases enough to warrant their adoption?

We have read edifying reports in the English journals, wherein it was stated that some public functionary (a Lord of the Admiralty it might be, who knows as much about iron plates and the effect of shot upon them as he does about Lord Rosse's telescope) peered curiously at the indentation caused by the shot, or at the remains of the plates, and surveying the cracks and the shattered condition of the armor, sits down and writes reports that the plates are impervious, and that 5½-inch armor is heavy enough for any ship, and proof against the best modern artillery. Does the editor of the *Mechanics' Magazine* not know that the best 6-inch solid plates made in France, have been smashed in fragments by our 15-inch gun at reasonable range? If not then we can tell him something new, and point to the system of laminated armor covering a heavy slab as novel, useful, and a defence which is invulnerable to the heaviest projectiles and charges we fire here, and they are not 68-pounders, but 380-pounders. This is no place to discuss the merits of different systems of armor plating, but speculation and theory applied to controvert the results of practice in actual and deadly combat, is so clearly absurd that we pursue the subject no further. The turrets of the monitors have never been penetrated, and we have examined the one on the *Passaic*, the vessel which came home as "seriously injured," and the deepest indentation in it was not over one inch and a half. The Whitworth shot, or facsimiles of them, struck the turret crossways, so to speak, and there was one large hole, in shape like an ellipse, in the top of the chimney, which showed plainly that these "destructive" missiles went end over end like boomerangs to their mark.

It is not our affair if the English choose to build frigates instead of monitors, and clothe them with slabs instead of armor of a proper kind. If shot smash and crack them so that they drop off, or the resistance to the live strength of the shot shatters the ship's frame so that she is useless after a severe engagement, these are results that must be learned by experience. We have put our trust in thin armor plates, skillfully applied, and have never been confounded. We are requested to consider the *Rolf Krake*, an English ship on the Coles's plan of turrets, and her doughty deeds. What has she done, pray? She went within long range of some tremendous Prussian 32-pound rifled guns, and not being actually sunk is pointed out as an example of an invulnerable iron-clad.

Our contemporary may deride our ships as much as he chooses, but when he brings to his aid the engraver, and designs something which he calls plans of our iron-clads, and gives them to the world as the fruit of American inventive skill, he must not blame us if we challenge their accuracy, and repudiate the forgery in the name of American engineers and American ingenuity.

RECENT AMERICAN PATENTS.

The following are some of the most important improvements for which Letters Patent were issued from the United States Patent Office last week; the claims may be found in the official list:—

Black-washing Pipe Molds.—This invention consists in the employment of a casing fitting nicely over the sprinkler and arranged in such a manner that when the casing covers the sprinkler the latter can be filled with black-wash and nothing is allowed to escape, and after the sprinkler has been adjusted in the proper position over the center of the mold, said casing can be readily removed; the application of the black-wash to the inside of the mold can thus be effected in a short time with little trouble and without danger of injuring the interior of the mold. The in-

vention also consists in the combination with the sprinkler of a conical guide piece or head, in such a manner that the sprinkler is retained in the center of the mold and prevented from damaging its sides. The invention consists, finally, in a fender placed under the mold into a suitable tank and used in combination with the sprinkler, in such a manner that the sprinkler, after having passed through the mold is still kept in the center and prevented from floating off to any other part of the tank whence it would be difficult to recover. George Ross, of Newport, Ky., is the inventor of this improvement.

Gas-burner Socket.—This invention relates to the sockets by which portable pendants or the flexible tubing, portable table-stand lights are attached to the burner of gasoliers or gas brackets. These sockets are made of two pieces, between which the india-rubber or other elastic packing ring or rings are commonly secured by burring the edge of one piece over a shoulder provided on the other; but this mode of securing the packing does not provide for the adjustment or contraction of the packing which, by the frequent removal of the socket from the burner and its replacement thereon, soon wears so as to fit the burner too loosely to prevent the escape of gas around it. The object of the invention is to provide for the adjustment and contraction of the packing to make it fit the burner tightly; and to this end it consists in uniting the two parts of the socket by means of a male screw-thread on one and a corresponding female screw on the other, by which means the packing is enabled to be compressed in the direction of the length of the burner, thereby causing the contraction of its opening and making it fit tightly to the burner. Joseph Todd, Madison, Ind., is the inventor of this improvement.

Combined Abdominal Supporter and Corset.—This invention consists in constructing stays or corsets in such a manner that they will, when applied to the wearer, be made to answer, besides their legitimate purpose, that of an abdominal supporter and a truss, and be capable of being applied so that they may be worn with great ease and comfort, and by females even when in a state of pregnancy, and also be capable of being adjusted and applied so that a requisite pressure may, in all cases, be exerted upon or against the abdomen of the wearer. Mrs. S. A. Moody, of New York city, is the inventor of this improvement.

Sheep Shears.—This invention consists in the employment or use of a guard attached to the shears in such a manner as to effectually prevent the latter from cutting the skin of the sheep during the process of shearing the latter, and also to prevent the wool from distending or forcing apart the blades of the shears during the cutting operation, a contingency which frequently occurs, especially when the shears loose their keen edge in consequence of the wool slipping in parallelly between the two blades. J. A. Hadley, of West Waterford, N. Y., is the inventor of this improvement.

Lock for Fire-arms.—This invention consists in giving additional support to an outside hammer applied to a fire-arm by making a hub boss on the inner face, and counter-sinking the outside of the frame of the arm concentric with the bearing of the main spindle or arbor of the lock, to form a bearing for the boss within the frame. It also consists in a certain novel mode of applying a safety stop in combination with the hammer for the purpose of stopping it a little way from the nipple or from the place where it strikes to fire the charge. Both features are applicable to either muzzle-loading or breech-loading fire-arms. Eben T. Starr, of New York city, is the inventor of this improvement.

Fire-arm.—The object of the first part of this invention is to enable the charges in several fixed barrels to be fired, one at a time, in succession, by means of a single hammer without giving the hammer any other movements than those necessary for cocking and striking, and to this end it consists in the employment of a revolving and sliding plunger interposed between the hammer and the barrels to transmit the impact of the blow of the hammer to the percussion priming employed for firing the charges. It also consists in so combining the revolving plunger with the hammer of the fire-arm that the necessary revolution of the plunger may be effected by the act of cocking the hammer. Eben T. Starr, of New York city, is the inventor of this improvement.

Hoop Skirt.—The object of this invention is to admit of the hoop-skirt readily contracting laterally, when subjected to any lateral pressure, and without being thrown up in front, as is now the case with the ordinary hoop-skirts. To this end the invention consists in having the lower hoops of the skirt divided into two parts and having them connected by rings or joints to form a flexible connection which will admit of sides of the skirt readily yielding and bending inward without being thrown upward in front when subjected to lateral pressure, as for instance in being seated in a public conveyance in close contact with passengers on each side. Mrs. S. A. Moody, of No. 12 East 16th street, New York, is the inventor of this skirt.

Comparative Cost of Petroleum and Gas.

On the 24th of February, William Marcet, Esq., M.D., F.R.S., read a paper before the Society of Arts, in London, giving the history of some elaborate experiments undertaken by him to ascertain the comparative quantity and cost of light produced by burning petroleum, illuminating gas and other substances. The results are thus given:—

“Let us now proceed to compare the light given by a petroleum-lamp, with a wick six-eighths of an inch broad, and that given by tallow candles, composites, sperm candles, and oil. The results have been arranged in the form of the following table, on which I shall make a few remarks:—

	Petroleum.	Gas.	Tallow Cands.	Composites.	Sperm Cands.	Colza Oil.	Sperm Oil.
Light emitted by petroleum lamp equal to.....	1'	1 to 13	10'	63	65	0.61	0.55
Weight burned in 3 hours 18 minutes	1386	127	408	550	480	2901	3250
Price of material burned in 3 hours 18 minutes.....	1d.	½d.	½d.	1d.	1½d.	2½d.	5d.

“From six experiments, where the amount of petroleum burned varied from 393 grains to 466 grains per hour, the average quantity of the oil consumed was 420 grains, the price of which, at 3s. 8d. a gallon, would be three-tenths of a penny, and consequently an amount of petroleum worth only 1d. will burn for 3 hours and 18 minutes. Now, 2 tallow candles burning for 3 hours and 18 minutes, will cost about 1d.; and as, according to my experiments, petroleum gives about 10 times as much light as a tallow candle, it will follow that the expense of burning petroleum will be the same as that of burning 2 tallow candles, and there will be no less than 5 times as much light obtained from the oil as from the 2 candles.

“In comparing the expense of burning petroleum with that of consuming coal gas, by measuring the amount of gas consumed with a very accurate gas-meter, it will be found that the quantity of gas burned by a good fish-tail burner in 3 hours and 18 minutes is 12.7 cubic feet, which at 4s. 6d. per 1,000 feet, will cost six-tenths of 1d., or, in round numbers, a trifle over one half-penny. With respect to the light given out, that of gas supplied as above is generally a little less powerful than that of petroleum, but for all practical purposes both lights may be considered equal; consequently, gas in London, at 4s. 6d. per 1,000 cubic feet, is half the price of petroleum, but the oil presents many advantages over gas which will make up, in a great measure, for the extra expense—as, for instance; the portability of a lamp; the pleasant, subdued light of petroleum, instead of the dazzling brightness of gas; and also the fact shown by Dr. Frankland, that there is less heat given out by petroleum than by gas, and less products of combustion injurious to health. Then in many small towns gas is very dear, and houses are but indifferently supplied with it; in other places, such as village country houses, there may be no gas at all, and in these cases rock oil becomes an invaluable boon.”

It will be observed that the price of London gas is just one-third of the price charged by the New York companies, and their's may also be superior in quality to ours. On the other hand petroleum costs nearly twice as much in London as in New York. Consequently in New York gas is about three times more costly than petroleum.

In consequence of the decline of the hoop skirt business many men were left with braiding machines on their hands. Baulked in this direction they have launched out into the business of braiding shoe strings, and some are prosecuting a profitable trade in this new line.

MISCELLANEOUS SUMMARY.

NASMYTH'S SOLAR DISCOVERIES.—Mr. Nasmyth claims to have been the first “to discover, delineate, and accurately describe” the structure and structural details of the sun's luminous surface, and those curious forms which he has termed the “willow leaves,” with which this luminary is completely covered. He states that they are scattered in every direction over its surface—no symmetrical arrangement being perceived. He estimates their length at 1,000 miles, and their width about 100. The thickness of the layer of those luminous spots does not appear to be considerable, as the semi-luminous atmosphere on which they float can be perceived through the interstices, and which give the sun its peculiar and well-known mottled appearance. The actual form of those singular bodies is best seen when they drift across a spot and form those “bridges” which occur when the spot is collapsing.

OUR FINANCES.—*Thompson's Bank Note Reporter* in an article upon the policy of Secretary Chase says:—“He appeals afresh to the people in this the most trying military and financial period of the rebellion, to come forward with heart and money. He is reducing the volume of currency gradually, and will continue to do so. If the stock and gold gamblers shall again attempt the game they played lately, he will bring the whole power of the Government, and its whole means, both here and abroad, to checkmate them. The Secretary of the Treasury relies upon the people for the ways and means; upon the army for victories; and upon Congress for adequate taxation.”

ARMED STEAMERS IN THE PACIFIC.—The Pacific mail steamship, *Constitution*, Commodore Watkins, has completed her armament, in mounting a hundred-pound Parrott rifled gun, in addition to her two Dahlgren rifles. This monster piece of ordnance is placed forward on the main deck, and its working gear is so arranged that it will have full play when called into action. It carries a solid shot of sixty pounds, and has a range of four miles. Her Dahlgrens are twelve-pound rifled guns, carrying a solid shot of sixteen pounds. With this armament Commodore Watkins entertains no fear of piratical cruisers, and taking into consideration the vast size and speed of the *Constitution*, even if he should encounter the *Alabama*, he could easily capture or sink her.

A MAN in Worcester, Mass., has invented a machine for turning clock and watch pivots, or cutting round tenons on square or round rods or wire. Pivots of different sizes and length are cut in this machine on any size wire or rod with the greatest accuracy, and without centering, the pivot or tenon being perfectly true with the outside of the rod upon which it is made. It also makes tenons upon any kind of tubing, such as gas pipe or gun barrels, without centering or using a mandrel, said tenon being true with the inside of the bore.

MORRIS ISLAND would be a great place for a junk dealer. A recent letter says that over one hundred tons of iron, consisting of broken guns, fragments of shells and unexploded shells, have been gathered in a heap at the ordnance depot, and that the quantity would be greatly augmented, if the projectiles buried in the sand were dug up and added to the heap.

CATALOGUE OF NEBULÆ.—A valuable work, containing all of Sir W. Herschel's nebulae (2,500 in number), with other catalogues, and comparisons between them, has been published by M. Auwers. The want of such a work has long been felt by such observers as were engaged in searching for comets, as no complete catalogue existed previously.

THE hot-air bath is recommended as a possible cure of phthisis. Some of the most eminent British physicians are recommending the Turkish bath as a great restorative of health.

It costs \$50 per day to board at the hotels in Wilmington, N. C., and the fare is represented as very poor at that.

THE workmen are laying the ways for launching the *Puritan*, and she will probably be launched in the course of a few weeks.

AMY SOLOMON, of Attleboro, Massachusetts, died May 1st, at the age of one hundred and seven years.

WE are indebted to Hon. James Brooks, M. C., for valuable public documents.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

FRENCH ARMOR PLATES.—Further trials of French armor plates, made by Messrs. Petin, Gaudet & Co., of the Rive de Gier, have taken place, since our last, at Portsmouth, and in each case their 4½-inch plates have earned the distinction A 1, to which only the best 6-inch plates of home manufacture have yet attained. The plates were tried in the usual manner, with a 68 lb. shot, fired with 16 lbs. of powder, at a range of 200 yards. The results have caused much comment in naval circles as well as among our iron masters.—*London Engineer.*

[A 15-inch shot was fired at a 6-inch best French plate with a charge of 30 pounds of powder, quite recently, in Washington, and after the shot struck there was a very large quantity of scrap iron in the place of the French plate.—Eds.]

THE PENALTIES OF FAME.—The great English poet Tennyson is exposed to great annoyance from the curiosity of intruders. Strangers are found from time to time seated in his garden, peering in at his windows, wandering freely through his grounds. From the lawn in front, when conversing with his family in assumed privacy, he has, on casually looking up, discovered an enterprising British tourist taking mental notes of his conversation from the branches of a tree above. Mr. Tennyson has been compelled to make fences, raise embankments, train foliage, and in fact half fortify his house, and in spite of all is not permitted to enjoy what any of our readers so circumstanced would expect to enjoy as a thing of course—the quiet freedom of a country home.

THE ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH CABLE.—Messrs. Glass, Elliott & Co., of London, have purchased the entire works of the Gutta Percha Company, and formed a new company under the name of the “Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company,” with a capital of £1,000,000, for the purpose of making and maintaining telegraph lines of communication, both submarine and on land, in every part of the world. The new company are to carry out Messrs. Glass, Elliott & Co.'s contract with the directors of the Atlantic Telegraph Company to manufacture and lay down, in the summer of 1865, the cable between Ireland and Newfoundland.

THERE have been launched at St. Petersburg two gunboats, constructed in the building yard of Messrs. Carr & McPherson of that city. Those two vessels, named the *Latnik* and *Bronenosetz* (which signify “Clad in a Cuirass,” and “Coat of Mail”), are constructed on the American system improved by Ericsson, and armed with two cannons. They are 200 feet long, 46 feet wide, and 11 feet deep. The engines are of 160 horse power. The launch, which took place in the presence of the Minister of the Navy and a great number of officers of the fleet, was followed by a breakfast.

A PAPER has been addressed to the Agricultural Society of Chalons, in which it is stated that potatoes may be safely grown free from disease by merely planting them in June instead of April. The writer, who has proved his theory by several years of successful experiment, is of opinion that by planting the roots in April they become corrupted by the alternate frost and heat.

MEASURES for restocking the lakes and rivers of Switzerland with fish have for some time past been in operation. Up to the present time a million and a half of young trout have been introduced into the Lake of Zurich.

AN enormous cylinder, weighing above 30 tons, intended for Her Majesty's iron ship *Minotaur*, was received at Woolwich recently, from Messrs. John Penn & Son, having been conveyed thither by a team of 30 horses.

FOUR steel paddle-steamers, very fast vessels, are reported to be building at Liverpool for the Confederate merchant service. They are intended to run the blockade. They will be acceptable additions to our navy.

THE French now make bonnets out of india-rubber, painted to imitate Leghorn braid. India-rubber bonnets ought to fit any head.

THE American copper-toe shoe is introduced into use in England, and is much approved.



An Experiment with a Steam Engine.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—I was called upon a few days since by Mr. G. B. McDonald, constructing engineer of the Louisville rolling mill, to witness an experiment on one of its principal engines—an account of which may prove both useful and instructive to many of your readers.

In this trial the throttle valve alone was used (the governor valve was thrown full open). After setting the throttle so as to give about the ordinary piston travel per minute it so remained through the experiment. The engine when cutting off at half-stroke made 28 revolutions per minute; the change was then made to full stroke by simply changing the cam hooks, when the running speed fell off until only 17 revolutions per minute were obtained in the same time. These tests were repeated three several times during half an hour, with precisely the same results. The boiler pressure by the gage was 125 lbs. The engine was merely driving the unloaded machinery—shafting, gearing, &c.—which equals about fifty tons.

Mr. McDonald stated that the engine in question was in first-rate order, as it had been running but a few days since it was thoroughly overhauled by the maker. It has a 26-inch cylinder by 5½ feet stroke, with puppet valves, levers and lifters worked by eccentrics. The fly-wheel, 18 feet in diameter, is on the counter-shaft, driven by a 16-foot spur wheel on the engine shaft, and made about 2½ revolutions to 1 of the engine.

Does not the above test show the practical difference between wire-drawing, as it is termed, and expanding steam?

In my practical tests of stationary engines, using slide valves and steam chests, I long since discovered there was a proper or proportional size for the capacity of the steam chest relative to the size of the steam cylinder and point of cutting off. My experiments showed that a point could be reached where the supply preserved with the chest would approximate very closely to that of the boiler, while using the common governor and valve. It is easy to perceive, if the chest was too small, that the quantity would fall short; if too large, the amount of pressure would not be reached. Beside, large chests or castings, to fill between the governor valve and piston (when under the control of a governor), cause more fluctuation of speed than small ones, and especially so where the amount of fly-wheel is insufficient, which is too generally the case in the West.

N. COPE.

Louisville, Ky., April 23, 1864.

[We should like to see cards from the engine in question—they would tell the whole story. As our correspondent adds—in another portion of his acceptable letter—the principle, or rather the reason, for the defect is not new, and has been suggested many times before. Engines in general—ordinary stationary engines—follow a great deal further than they should; more steam enters the cylinder than is required to do the work, and the result is not only a waste of fuel but a loss of useful effect in the engine itself. Such engines labor heavily and act as if afflicted with the asthma. Five-eighths of the stroke is far enough for any engine to follow. Very many engines whose ports remain open to the end of the stroke, would be greatly benefited by adding lap, if the valve is a slide, and shifting the eccentric to cut off sooner, or altering the toes and eccentric to make the valves drop sooner if they are poppets.—Eds.]

A Valuable Testimonial.

MESSRS. MUNN & Co.—Gentlemen:—For a number of years past I have been constantly experimenting in machinery, and since the commencement of the rebellion, in gunnery, shot, shell, &c. During my short career as an inventor I believe I have employed "Munn & Co." in all the business connected with the Patent Office excepting one job. During the three past years six patents have been secured for me in this country and one in England and one in France. You will accept my most grateful acknowledgments for the prompt manner and untiring energy always

exhibited [in your efforts in all my cases before the Patent Office. Allow me, through you, to thank your very able and gentlemanly assistants at Washington for their numerous kindnesses to me.

I have sold out my interest to the "American Projectile Co.," No. 48 Pine street, who will continue the business as usual. The parties are men of worth and influence, and will no doubt continue to employ your services. Should life and health be continued to me, I hope to be remembered as among those who are engaged in some of the great enterprises for the development of our national industry.

Yours, very respectfully,

W. STAFFORD.

New York, May 3, 1864.

[Mr. Stafford is well known to the readers of our journal as the inventor of the "Stafford Projectile."—Eds.]

Destruction of an Iron Propeller in a Coppered Ship.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—At the last meeting of the Institute of Technology, in this city, a gentleman, well known as one of our greatest pioneers in all that relates to shipping, presented some fragments of a cast-iron propeller, which was attached to a coppered ship, which was remarkably deteriorated. To use the gentleman's own words:—"It had the consistence of graphite, and could be shaved off with a pocket-knife to a depth of ¼ of an inch from the surface." Several reasons were given for this rapid deterioration (the screw having been in the water but a few months), but the right one perhaps was not hit upon. It is well known that a piece of iron in a salt of copper will precipitate all the copper in a metallic state, and a corresponding equivalent of iron will take its place in the solution, forming thus a salt of iron. Now might not this reaction have taken place in the case of this propeller?

Sea water contains soluble sulphates. The coppering of the ship was probably dissolved in the form of a sulphate, and the iron of the screw being brought into contact with this solution, the copper was precipitated and the iron was dissolved, the crust on the casting which was found to be so soft, was then composed of the oxide of iron [Fe₂O₃] probably, together with the carbon of the cast-iron which was left after the iron had been dissolved; and this carbon, which is in fact graphite or black-lead, mixed with the oxide of iron, was the substance forming the crust, which could be so easily cut with the knife. If this reason should be the right one it would be quite out of the question, practically, to use cast-iron propellers on coppered ships unless they could be covered with some pigment which would preclude the possibility of contact between the iron and the salt of copper supposed to be in solution in the water.

F. W. E.

Boston, Mass., May 2, 1864.

[This is doubtless the correct explanation. When two metals in contact are corroded, the action is confined wholly to the electro-positive metal.—Eds.]

Fan for Hospitals Wanted.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—I would suggest to the inventors of the United States to contrive a fan of some kind that can be affixed to hospital beds, and which will fan for ten or fifteen minutes without stopping. No one can tell the benefit of such a contrivance or the satisfaction it would give to those who have to lie on hospital beds in the heat of summer.

Baltimore, Md., April 22, 1864.

[A good suggestion; to which we will add that the fan should draw the air out of the room, effecting a gentle circulation. Merely disturbing the air by a fan shaken back and forth is a waste of the power employed.—Eds.]

Large American Planing Machine.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—Having read an account of a large English planing machine on page 266, current volume of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, I think it only just to make mention of a planing machine of American manufacture built by Messrs. Poole & Hunt, and now in operation at their works at Woodberry, near Baltimore, Md. It will plane in its present unfinished condition 12 feet square by 20 feet long, but when completed its length will be increased to 45 feet. It is now fitted up with three tool boxes, two on the

cross-slide and one on the side, but provision has been made for a fourth one should it be deemed necessary.

J. JONSON.

Woodberry, Md., May 3, 1864.

Indignation vs. Goodyear's Patent.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—In common with many others, I beg leave to express my thanks to you for your fidelity to the people, in reference to your course on the Goodyear Patent, and on numerous other occasions. I can hardly believe that the present Congress will consent to be bribed by mercenary capitalists. It is none the less true, however, that the "love of money is the root of all evil;" still less do I believe that the people will tamely submit to be betrayed by their own representatives. Should this monopoly be extended, many a politician's career is ended forever. Such a popular demonstration will be made by an outraged people as will cause to tingle both the ears of every Congressional culprit. Meanwhile—I would suggest that every man interested in the right cause address his immediate representative in Congress, to use his influence to have the "yeas" and "nays" called upon the final vote. To this action on the part of their public agent, the people have a sacred right, and I trust that it may have a useful result. I cannot, however, but repeat my belief that our present Congress is incapable of the moral baseness of sacrificing their constituents to monied mercenaries.

O.

Maine, April 29, 1864.

Unseemly Extravagance.

The lavish expenditure and love of display which is becoming so prevalent among a portion of our people has called forth many remonstrances; and there are voices—not crying in the wilderness, but strong in their utterances, among men that cannot let the folly pass unrebuked. Nor should they. We reproduce herewith an article upon this subject which recently appeared in the *Evening Post*:—

"A man builds a marble stable on the rear of his lot, at a cost of eighty thousand dollars, and fits up a private theatre over it. Another pays eight thousand dollars for a pair of horses to drive on the road for his pleasure; and many give from fifteen hundred to three thousand dollars for the same object. Another provides a dinner for a dozen friends—rejecting the old superstition of the unlucky thirteenth—and this simple dinner costs one thousand dollars. A children's party is given, in an up-town house, where every child is clad entirely in dresses imported from Paris. An American citizen purchases a house for over one hundred thousand dollars, and tears it down, to rebuild upon its site one yet more costly. These are signs of the times—are they not evidences of a state of things unhealthful, feverish, threatening to the honest simplicity of our political life; and threatening not less evil to the ideas and the principles of which that life has hitherto been a fair exponent? What business have Americans, at any time, with such vain show, such useless magnificence? But, especially, how can they justify it to themselves in this time of war? Some men have gained great fortunes during the last two or three years; but that does not excuse their extravagance. Is there nothing worthier than personal adornment in which to invest their means? Are there no enterprises open to these men of fortune which would benefit the country and their fellows as well as themselves? One man spends two hundred thousand dollars upon a dwelling-house; but he might build with this sum a long row of decent cottages, to rent to people in moderate circumstances; he might enable fifty or a hundred families of workingmen to live cleanly and respectably in New York, and thus make himself a public benefactor—and that without sinking his money where he can never recover it. Or, instead of dressing a few children in silks and jewels, and robbing them of the freshness and charm of youth by these vanities, why not spend the money in sending the homeless children of the city to comfortable farm-houses in the West, where they will be trained to industry and virtuous conduct, and grow up good citizens? The sum wasted on a dozen children at a party would probably suffice to send a hundred to the West, and make honest citizens of them. In England, during the French war, useful enterprises of all kinds were originated, and prospered. There was then, as with

us now, an inflated currency; great fortunes were made by speculative ventures, as here now. No doubt, too, there was extravagance; but there arose, at the same time, a spirit favorable to useful enterprises of many kinds—such as we wish could obtain amongst us. We have far better opportunities for such use of capital; we have mines, new manufactures, waste lands, to be developed and brought into profitable use; we have comparatively a new country to our back, in which the prudent capitalist can see a thousand opportunities to increase his store, and, at the same time, benefit his countrymen. The citizen, therefore, who wastes his gains upon ostentatious houses, extravagant furniture, dress, or food, commits a crime against his country. And especially is extravagance culpable in New York, where, though but half the island is built upon, there is scarcely a place fit for an honest workman to bring up his family in, or where they are not exposed to the corrupting influences of squalor and vice."

Facts about Meats.

Every wife and mother owes it to herself, her husband, and her children, as well as to society at large, to prevent waste in every department of the household, whether provisions are cheap or dear, whether the husband is rich or poor; for waste is a crime against humanity, an insult to the boanteous Hand which "giveth us all things richly to enjoy." On the other hand, a true economy is one of the wisest, the best, and ennobling of domestic virtues. A hundred careful experiments were made in England in reference to roasting and boiling meats, in order to ascertain the respective losses:—

Roasted chickens lost 15 per ct.; beef ribs and sirloins, 19 per ct.; geese, 19 per ct.; boiled mutton legs, 10 per ct.; boiled beef, 15 per ct.; boiled shoulder mutton, 28 per ct.; turkeys, 20 per ct.; mutton legs and shoulders, 24 per ct.; ducks, 27 per cent

Boiling beef saves more than four per cent over roasting. If a leg of mutton is boiled it loses ten per cent; if roasted, twenty-five per cent! The fatter meat is, the greater the loss; it should be moderately fat to make it tender; but there is an unprofitable fatness. Eleven pounds of roast rib-pieces loses two pounds, and the bones one pound, so that of the eleven pounds, only seven pounds come to the table. Hence if roast rib-pieces cost in New York, in April, 1864, twenty cents a pound at the butcher's stall, it is more than thirty-one cents a pound on the dinner-table.

It is philosophically true that one pound of clear roast beef is more concentrated than one pound of boiled beef, has less matter in it, and hence may contain more nourishment; but the more concentrated food is, the more unwholesome it is, not only because it requires a greater digestive power to convert it into pure blood, but the sense of sufficiency at meals is induced to a considerable extent by the bulk of what is taken, and if we eat concentrated food until there is bulk enough to remove the feeling of hunger, there is so much nutriment in it that nature can't extract it all in a perfect manner; hence there is not only too much nutriment for the wants of the system, but all of it is imperfectly prepared, and we really get less strength and less pure blood out of it, than if much less had been eaten, or it had been taken in a more bulky, or, if you please, in a more watery condition. This is the reason why dyspeptics and others eat a great deal, but they do not get strong. But if there is too much bulk, there is not enough nutriment, although a great deal is taken into the stomach. Porter and beer, for example, fill up the stomach, and seem to make persons fleshy, but there is but little nutriment and great bulk; but great beer-drinkers are never strong, they are puffy.—*Hall's Journal of Health.*

A PLAN for picking pockets has been invented by the Rebel prisoners confined at Wheeling, Va. When a new prisoner arrives some one of the initiated starts the cry, "fresh fish," which is understood to convey the knowledge of the arrival. When the new prisoner is ushered in he is immediately seized by the occupants of the room, placed in a basket, and thrown up. They continue to toss the new comer in this manner until his pocket-book falls out, when he is released and the pocket-book is confiscated.

Anti-fouling Composition for Iron Ships.

The *Circassian* is in the dry dock at the Charleston Navy Yard, receiving another application of Mr. Davis's *anti-animalcule* composition, which has been previously used with such success on her bottom. The Navy Department having been informed of the effective character of this preparation have approved of it, and no doubt, within a few months every iron vessel in the navy will have it applied. It will be one of the most servicable things yet introduced into the navy, and by it the great defect of iron vessels—their liability to foul bottoms—will be entirely remedied.

The invention is considered one of great importance and a very desirable acquisition. By it, our monitors and iron-clads will be in a better sea-going condition than ever before. When the *Circassian* was hauled into dry-dock, and her sides exposed to view, she was pronounced the cleanest ship ever before placed in the dock after a cruise. Her bottom was as clean as the day she was launched. The English and French Consuls, Capt. Moodie of the *Asia*, and a number of our principal ship-owners have visited the *Circassian*, and expressed themselves in the most favorable manner regarding the *anti-animalcule* composition.

[If this article is all that it is stated to be, it is invaluable. European chemists and inventors have labored in vain up to this time to produce a practical non-fouling coating for iron ships.—Eds.]

Increasing the Illuminating Power of Gas.

The editor of the *Sanitary Reporter* (England), in an article on testing gas, says:—"The following are distinct modes of increasing the power of an argand burner consuming ordinary coal-gas; they have all been long known to the writer:—1st. Contracting the central opening to about .45 to .5 of an inch diameter. 2d. By a perforated disk round the burner, and resting on the gallery which supports the burner. 3d. By interposing a thin piece of paper or metal to contract the passage of air through the central opening. 4th. By placing a little contracted cap on the top of the chimney. Now, every one of these contrivances will considerably increase the power of the argand burner. Moreover, all these contrivances act on the simple principle of diminishing the velocity of the current of atmospheric air, and thus allowing the minute particles of carbon, which the gas contains, to be longer suspended in the flame."

Water Meters in Philadelphia.

All large consumers of water in Philadelphia, are to be charged hereafter by the gallon. Mr. Birkinbine, the Chief Engineer, has issued a circular announcing that water meters will be introduced at the expense of the consumers, and bills collected quarterly at the following rates: From one thousand to ten thousand gallons per day, two cents per hundred gallons. For from ten thousand to twenty thousand gallons per day, one and a half cents per one hundred gallons. For from twenty thousand gallons per day and upward, one cent per hundred gallons.

PURE COFFEE.—The editor of the *Baltimore American* visited the Commissary Department of one of the large military hospitals a few days since, and noticed several barrels of dried coffee grounds, the purpose whereof excited curiosity. The polite Commissary informed him that they received twelve dollars a barrel for the grounds. But "what is it purchased for," he asked. "Well," said the Commissary, hesitatingly, "it is re-aromatized by the transforming hand of modern chemistry, and put up in pound papers, which are decorated with attractive labels and high sounding names."

EXTENSION OF THE STEEL MANUFACTURE.—The Whipple File Manufacturing Company, at Ballard Vale, Mass., have erected during the last year, a building 200 by 77 feet, for the manufacture of their own steel, and they claim to make a better article than they have ever been able to purchase. They will soon be producing 30 tons per week. Their files are cut by machinery.

IN the evidence in regard to a bridge case a few days since, an engineer testified that a measured march of men was the severest test of a bridge, and that the trotting of a horse produced double the vibrations of a twelve or fourteen-ton locomotive.



- J. W. W., of N. Y.—We know of no method of sighting a gun with perfect accuracy except by actual trial in shooting it. The back-sight is generally made to slip so that it can be adjusted by fring.
- J. S. B., of Ala.—An illustration of Giffard's injector was published on page 260, Vol. III, new series of the *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*. A steam pipe from the upper part of the boiler terminates in a conical end opposite a similar end of a pipe leading into the bottom of the boiler, a short space separating the two pipes. The feed water fills this space, and when the steam comes in contact with the water it is condensed, forming a vacuum, into which the steam flows with such velocity that its momentum not only carries itself into the boiler, but also a portion of water.
- W. C., of N. Y.—If any one allows you to work a low pressure steam engine for manufacturing purposes from the exhaust steam of another engine close by, for \$10 a year, we advise you to keep your own counsel and say nothing about it. There is no work devoted to super-heated steam that we know of. If you read the *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN* carefully, you will find all the latest intelligence respecting compound steam engines.
- W. S. S., of R. I.—We have no receipts for pickling cucumbers that we can recommend at present. Your request is slightly out of our line.
- H. B. W., of Conn.—Twisted drills are made at South Bridgewater, Mass., and Newark, N. J., but we do not know the name of the maker in either place.
- A. B. M., of Mich.—We know nothing about an instrument for "graining;" you should address some wholesale paint dealers on the subject. Messrs. Reynolds, Devoe & Pratt, 100 Fulton street, can probably tell you.
- Reader, of Mass.—E. V. Haughwout & Co., of this city, are manufacturers of china ware, and can give you the information you ask for.
- A. L. L., of U. S. A.—Prof. Henry first ascertained that electricity could be passed through wires more than three miles in length. He made the important discovery that the resistance of long wires might be overcome by increasing the intensity of the current, that is by increasing the number of cups or pairs in the battery.
- U. C., of Ohio.—There is some defect in your Leyden jar that you do not point out.

Money Received.

At the Scientific American Office, on account of Patent Office business, from Wednesday, May 4, 1864, to Wednesday, May 10, 1864:—

W. & S., of N. Y., \$25; T. & W., of N. Y., \$25; S. W. K., of Vt., \$45; J. P. E., of N. Y., \$16; J. S., of N. Y., \$16; J. S., of N. Y., \$42; H. H., of Ill., \$45; J. F., of Conn., \$20; F. J. N., of Maine, \$20; A. R. A., of England, \$16; S. & K., of Prussia, \$20; A. H. B., of N. Y., \$41; J. B. R., of N. Y., \$20; H. B. W., of N. Y., \$24; P. B. P., of N. Y., \$16; S. D. E., of Pa., \$20; I. T. G., of Iowa, \$20; P. H., of N. Y., \$41; R. D., of N. Y., \$16; H. A. A., of N. Y., \$41; H. C., of N. Y., \$16; P. C., of N. Y., \$20; J. W., of Mass., \$46; F. M. M., of Ind., \$20; E. W., of Mich., \$45; J. P. W., of Mass., \$54; T. P., of N. Y., \$65; M. B., of Ky., \$20; G. S. & H. C., of N. Y., \$20; W. D. M., of N. Y., \$36; J. Van D., of N. Y., \$20; M. C., of R. I., \$10; E. St. J., of N. Y., \$45; F. A. J., of Prussia, \$20; T. R., of N. Y., \$40; O. E. W., of Pa., \$20; J. B. W., of N. J., \$20; J. W. S., of Col. Ter., \$16; N. S. W., of Conn., \$20; S. R. B., of Wis., \$70; M. N., of N. Y., \$20; H. M., of N. Y., \$16; M. S., of Kansas, \$20; J. McF., of N. Y., \$45; J. O. S., of N. Y., \$45; L. G. K., of Mass., \$30; J. T., of Wis., \$16; F. J. G., of N. Y., \$18; S. R. H., of Mich., \$25; L. D. C., of Mich., \$21; W. S. N., of Conn., \$25; I. W. B., of Mich., \$16; D. H. H., of Ohio, \$15; J. A. D., of Ill., \$25; F. L. T., of Wis., \$11; S. M., of England, \$16; P. & T., of Pa., \$26; J. M. G., of Ill., \$25; F. C. L., of Iowa, \$15; T. & F., of Mass., \$15; P. P. P., of Mass., \$20; A. & S., of N. Y., \$25; D. L., of Vt., \$15; W. F., of Mass., \$16; McI. & R., of Col. Ter., \$100; H. J. W., of Ohio, \$25; A. K., Jr., of N. Y., \$16; J. G., of R. I., \$16; S. & P., of Ill., \$17; L. S. M., of N. Y., \$25; J. & J. N. P., of Mass., \$16; F. & B., of Ill., \$21; S. L. O., of Conn., \$30; R. W. J., of N. Y., \$56; L. G., of Cal., \$15; W. F., of Cal., \$20; T. D., of N. Y., \$25; P. C. R., of Mass., \$25; R. W. J., of N. Y., \$25; W. G. R., of Mo., \$19; J. McK., of Ohio, \$25; J. P., of Canada, \$20; J. M. A., of Mass., \$25; W. D. B., of Mich., \$25; G. W. J., of Cal., \$20; A. D., of La., \$41; C. M., of N. Y., \$16; C. M. M., of N. J., \$29; D. & B., of N. T., \$15; J. P., of Ill., \$16; G. F. B., of D. C., \$16; J. A. N., of Mass., \$16; W. D., of Cal., \$25; J. M. H., of Oregon, \$45; W. P. W., of N. Y., \$16; F. J. R., of Ill., \$26; E. K., of N. Y., \$25; W. B., of Iowa, \$25; H. H. H., of Iowa, \$25; J. C. P., of Ill., \$25; J. L. R., of Ohio, \$25; W. H. R., of Ky., \$28; J. F. L., of Ill., \$15; W. B. T., of Mass., \$16; W. C., of Cal., \$20; O. P. F., of N. Y., \$16; J. P. E., of N. Y., \$25.

Persons having remitted money to this office will please to examine the above list to see that their initials appear in it and if they have not received an acknowledgment by mail, and their initials are not to be found in this list, they will please notify us immediately, stating the amount and how it was sent, whether by mail or express.

Specifications and drawings and models belonging to parties with the following initials have been forwarded to the Patent Office, from Wednesday, May 4, 1864, to Wednesday, May 11, 1864:—

S. & W., of N. Y.; A. H. B., of N. Y.; F. J. G., of N. Y.; C. M. M., of N. J.; L. S. M., of N. Y.; T. D., of N. Y.; J. M. G., of Ill.; S. L., of Mo.; H. J. M., of Ohio; G. & P., of Cal.; A. J., of Md.; E. C., of Iowa; J. L. R., of Ohio; T. & W., of N. Y.; P. H., of N. Y.; R. W. J., of N. Y.; W. D. B., of Mich.; J. C., of Mass.; J. M. A., of Mass.; L. G. K., of Mass.; J. McK., of Ohio; P. J. R., of Mass.; W. A. J., of Cal.; J. C. P., of Ill.; F. J. R., of Ill.; E. B., of Conn.; J. S., of N. Y.; H. A. A., of N. Y.; W. D., of Cal.; P. & T., of Pa.; S. L. O., of Conn.; L. D. C., of Mich.; W. S. N., of Conn.; S. R. H., of Mich.; W. & F., of Pa.; A. & S., of N. Y.; W. B., of Iowa; W. H. R., of Ky.; J. P. E., of N. Y.

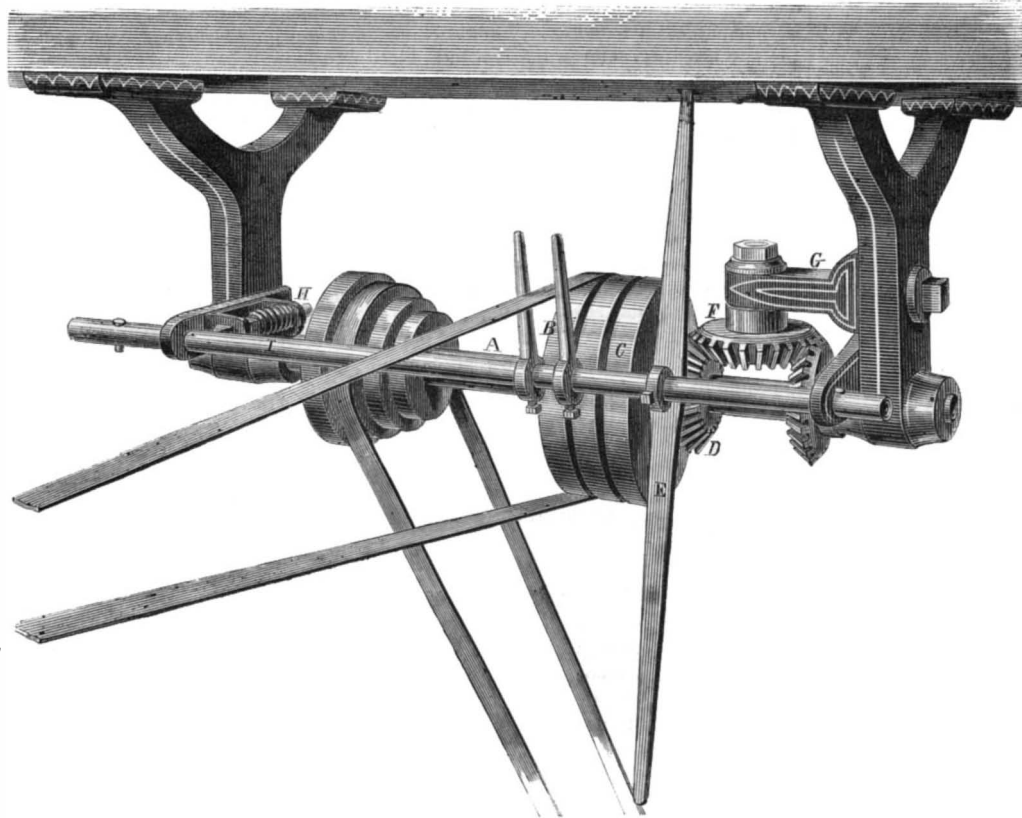
Reversing Gear for Counter-shafts.

It very often happens, in running machines, that a shaft requires to be so arranged that it can be revolved either way, forward or back. This is generally effected by having four pulleys and two belts, one of which is crossed, and turns the pulley it runs on in a contrary direction to its fellow. This plan is costly and troublesome, for many reasons, and the machine illustrated in the engraving published herewith is intended to accomplish the object with but one belt and three pulleys, thus saving the expense of the extra belt and pulley used in the old plan, besides being much more convenient and less liable to get out of order. From the following description the reader will be able to understand it clearly. The shaft, A, has three pulleys on it; the center one is a loose pulley, B, and the other one, C, is keyed fast to the shaft. The pulley, C, has a bevel gear, D, cut on one side, but the pulley itself is not fastened on the shaft, A. It will be seen, then, that by moving the shipper-bar, E, over from the pulley, B, on to the pulley, C, the intermediate gear, F, suspended from the hanger, G, causes the main shaft, A, to revolve in an opposite direction. When the bar is reversed again the pulley, C, revolves freely on the shaft, A, the same as a loose pulley, and does not interfere in any way with the action of the fast pulley, B. The shaft, A, has a spring stop at H, which catches in recesses in the shaft, I, so that the shaft will be arrested when it has gone far enough to throw the wheels into gear with each other. This is a very simple and efficient arrangement for the counter-shafts of all machines, and is particularly useful in screw-cutting, where the motion has to be instantly changed sometimes. It was patented on the 27th of June, 1863, by C. G. Shaw, of Florence, Mass. For further information address the inventor at that place.

Improved Lock.

The above engraving represents an improved door lock, whereby the ordinary method of opening a door by turning the knob is dispensed with, and the apartment can be entered by pulling the handle, as hereafter described. Similarly constructed locks are very much in use in New York and other cities at the present time, and are much liked. This plan furnishes a means of security in addition to the lock and bolt, which may be used in connection with it the same as with other fastenings. In the engraving the plate is broken away to show the interior. The arrangement is merely an oscillating shaft, A, which constitutes the catch; this shaft or bolt is cut out square, as at B, for a quarter of its circumference, so that it rests fairly on the spring stop, C. The shaft has two arms, D, upon it, between which the square part of the handle, E, passes; the small pin this handle strikes against the arms. Thus it will be seen that by pushing or pulling, according to the direction in which the person approaches, the oscillating shaft is partially turned so as to clear the

spring-stop, and the door can be opened. When it is to be closed the bolt strikes on the inclined part, F, of the spring-stop and depresses it so that it is out of the way. The case containing this bolt is screwed to the door jamb, and the other part to the door itself. After each operation the shaft is returned to the



SHAW'S REVERSING GEAR FOR COUNTER-SHAFTS.

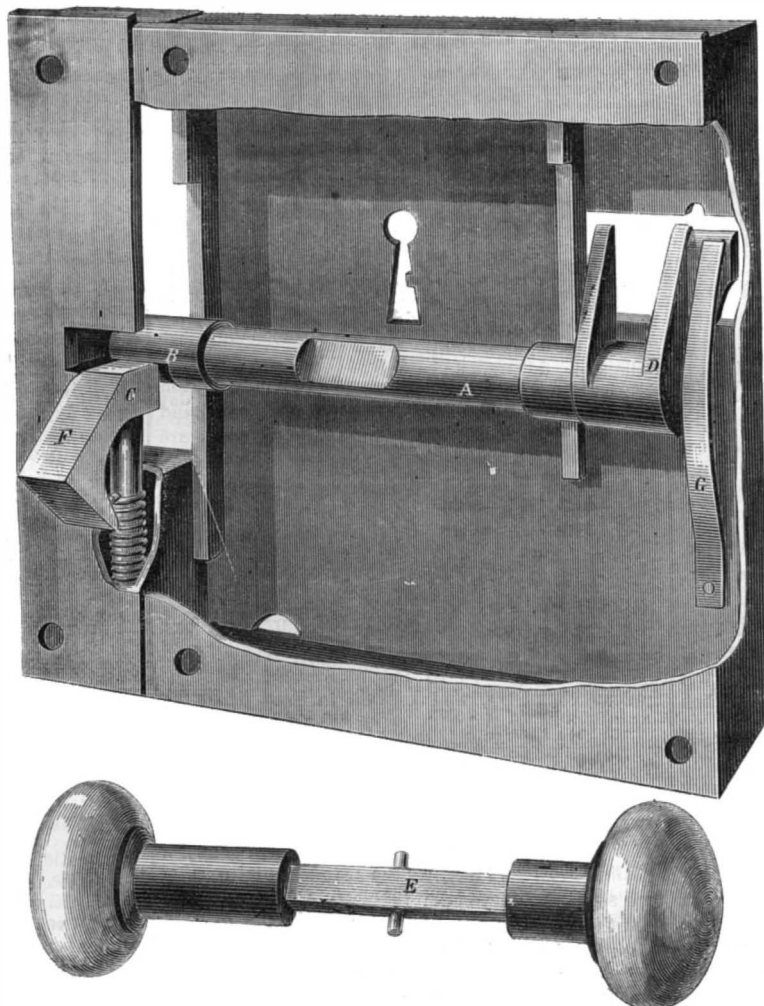
proper position by the spring, G, on one of the arms. This is a convenient arrangement for the object in

Influence of Smoke on Vegetation.

In a paper read before the Royal Society, London, partly on the above subject, Professor Voelcker states that he has had many opportunities of becoming practically conversant with the injurious effects which a smoky atmosphere produces on cereal crops, and that he regards a strong deposition of soot on wheat and other corn crops quite a sufficient evidence of the more or less complete injury which the crops must have suffered from the sulphurous acid always present in the air when such sooty deposits are seen on plants. The disadvantages of carrying on agricultural pursuits in the Potteries, or in districts where volumes of black smoke discharge enormous quantities of sulphurous acid into the air, are well known among the more intelligent and enterprising farmers. The injury done to vegetation by the smoke from copperworks has been traced beyond a distance of four miles. Of course it might be asserted that the mischief was caused by the arsenical vapors; but the latter are present in almost inappreciable small quantities, whilst as small an atmospheric percentage of sulphurous acid as the 1-800,000th is injurious to vegetation in wet weather

Entozoa in the Stomach of the Alligator.

Dr. A. Wynne Foot gives, in the *Dublin Quarterly Journal of Science*, the following interesting account of the condition of an alligator's stomach which had been attacked by nematoid worms. The animal was reported to have been in the habit of vomiting its food before death. The stomach, of a globular shape, was the size of an orange and distended with air; it contained 115 worms of the genus *Ascaris*, averaging in length from three to four inches; about one-half of them had spirally-convoluted tails; it also contained ten small pebbles and sharp-pointed flints (one of which was seven lines long); three pieces of charcoal (one of which was thirteen lines in length), and a soft pale coagulum with some yellowish viscid mucus which had an acid reaction. The surface of the stomach was covered with a series of irregular deposits of a fine yellowish matter, which were slightly raised and varied in extent from the size of a pea to that of a sixpence. These gave a sensation to the finger such as that produced by rubbing it against firm sand-paper, and even so adherent that they could not be removed without tearing away the subjacent stratum of tissue. The nature of these incrustations is not mentioned by Dr. Foot, so we presume the material composing them was not submitted to chemical analysis. The facts are, however, of some interest.



HACKMAN'S "PUSH-AND-PULL" LOCK.

view, and has been patented by Henry Hackman, Jr. For further information address the inventor at Wil-low-street, Taque P. O., Lancaster Co., Pa.

seen except during its transit across the sun's disk. Its next transit will be early the morning of June 18, 1864.

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PATENT CLAIMS AND PATENT BUSINESS.

It is our intention, hereafter, to publish the official list of claims of patents one week earlier than usual, and if Commissioner Holloway will but second our wishes in this respect, by a prompt transmission of the copy, we can fully carry out this arrangement. In consequence of this change, the present number will include the issue of claims for two weeks; we therefore suspend, for this week, further extracts from the Annual Report of the Commissioner.

In this connection we would also state that, owing to the large increase in our Patent Office business—which amounts to nearly one half of the entire business of the country in this line—we are obliged to increase our facilities. We have secured valuable and experienced assistants in this department, and are now better prepared than ever before for a large addition of cases, and a correspondingly prompt attention to them.

Through our efficient Branch Office at Washington we have made nearly eight thousand preliminary examinations into the novelty of new inventions. We have efficient assistants constantly at the Patent Office giving personal attention to our cases; and thus, with our additional force, we shall, as heretofore, give every possible facility to all inventors who intrust their cases in our hands.

THE THEORY OF BOILER EXPLOSIONS FROM SUPERHEATED STEAM.

On the inquest into the cause of the *Chenango* disaster, one of the witnesses stated that the generally received theory of boiler explosions is that they result from a mixture of superheated with saturated steam—that the steam by becoming superheated forms a reservoir of heat, which evaporates the minute particles of water carried along by the saturated steam, and thus produces an exploding pressure.

It is probable that a dozen other theories might with as much truth be said to be generally received. At all events, several others have been advanced which cannot be so easily and clearly shown to be unsound.

It is fully proved that the pressure in the boilers of the *Chenango* just before the explosion was 33 to 34 lbs. to the square inch. Now if we suppose a portion of that steam to have been superheated to a temperature equal to red heat, how much heat would that

steam have contained, and what would that heat do in evaporating water and producing pressure?

According to the determinations of Fairbairn and Tate, saturated steam formed under a pressure of 33.1 lbs. per square inch has a volume 758 times greater than the water from which it was formed. Consequently a pound of such steam occupies in round numbers 12 cubic feet. Its temperature is 255°, and if we superheat it to 968°, its volume will be doubled; supposing it to expand in the same proportion as air, though Fairbairn found the co-efficient of the expansion of steam to be a trifle greater than that of air. We now have a pound of steam occupying a space in the boiler of 24 cubic feet, and if we introduce a pound of water at a temperature of 255° into this space, what will be the effect? Plainly, the temperature of the steam and water will be equalized; and if there is just enough surplus heat and no more in the steam to evaporate the water, we shall have the space filled with saturated steam at the old pressure of 33.1 lbs. per inch.

But there is not enough surplus heat in the steam to evaporate the water. The specific heat of steam is 0.475, consequently it would take only 339 units to raise the temperature of 1 lb. 713 degrees—from 255° to 968°. The latent heat of steam at a temperature of 255° is 930°, in other words 930 units of heat are required to evaporate 1 lb. of water at a temperature of 255°.

The "great reservoir" of heat in superheated steam, so far from being sufficient to evaporate enough water to produce an explosive pressure, is not sufficient to evaporate enough water to fill its own volume with saturated steam. The introduction of water into superheated steam under the conditions which obtained in the *Chenango* boilers would not have increased the pressure in the least.

WAR AND THE PROGRESS OF INVENTION.

It was very natural that many persons at the outbreak of the war should have prophesied business stagnation and general inactivity of industrial enterprises. "When war wages its wide desolation," said these modern prophets, "the country will be ruined and not one stone left upon another of all that commercial and manufacturing greatness which is our pride and boast." If the reader is curious to see how far these visions have been correct he has only to look at the published list of patent claims in this number of the *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*. There are no less than 218 patents, re-issues, designs, &c., all of which bear date May the 3d and 10th, showing them to be of recent origin. We could not make any comment which would have half the weight of the silent testimony of this long list. It shows convincingly that war, instead of being an evil to the general manufacturing interests, lends increased impetus to all branches of it. Save in the cotton manufacture (which languishes for want of material), there is hardly one other that is not busier than it has been in years gone by. Iron is in such demand that the producers of it command their own price, paper is the same, woolen goods are the same, wearing apparel of every sort is costly, and this in spite of all that inventors are doing to reduce the price by making more of it in less time than was formerly required. The progress of invention during the war has been steadily increasing, and it is difficult to foretell what the consequence would have been to the nation had not the people lent their inventive skill in the hour of trial. Without the *Monitor*; we should have been overwhelmed by the *Merrimac*; without the shot and shell of Stafford, Parrott, Sawyer, Shenkl, James, Hotchkiss, and others, we should have suffered many a defeat; without Sharp's rifle, the Burnside breech-loader, the Spencer repeating-rifle, &c., the efficiency of our armies would have been seriously impaired; and we might continue the list indefinitely.

It is not alone in the manufacture of munitions of war that this inventive activity has been so strikingly manifested, but in all the various avenues of traffic and trade, on the farm and in the warehouse, the fact remains the same. There are machines now for every conceivable and inconceivable purpose, but these, so far from supplying the demand, and actually increase it. The sewing machine is a case in point. Let no man cease his exertions to lessen the severity of labor because some other enterprising person has been in the field before him. When this war is ended, the sun

will not shine upon a land so blest in all that constitutes true prosperity; it is apparent that those who have new and useful machinery, processes, or materials wherewith to aid manufacturers, will not lose their reward.

GAS ENGINES IN FRANCE.

Le Petit Journal, of Paris, in a long article sparkling with French vivacity, on the uses of the *Moteurs Lenoir*, states that large numbers of these engines are employed for various purposes in Paris. The writer discourses thus:—

"We have been to the Grand Hotel. It is not far, and we have examined the *Moteurs Lenoir* laboring for the comfort of the thousand travelers lodged in that caravansera of the great world. There is one which supplies all of the water for the hotel from the cellar to the garret; another raises the dishes from the basement to the fourth story; another turns the machine for breaking the ice and cooling the sillery, the cliquot. Six men were formerly required, half naked and panting, to operate this machine which the little motor turns like a top. Another motor raises to their respective stories the travelers comfortably seated in a saloon disposed for this perpendicular voyage; another raises the baggage, and all this without noise, without fire, without smoke.

"The complaisance of the mechanic charged in the hotel with all of the mechanical service, enables us to see how these motors put themselves in operation, and stop themselves instantaneously.

"What gives to them the movement—origin of their power? It is gas, which an electric spark inflames in the body of the piston. That gas—it is that which the immense *Compagnie parisienne* distributes in all the city. It comes to feed the *Lenoir* motor as it would feed a burner or a stove."

Le Gaz states that a *Lenoir* motor consumes about 720 feet of gas in ten hours for each horse-power. This would make, at the New York price of gas, a cost of 1.88 cents per horse-power per day. The fuel for a steam or air engine costs at the present high price of coal, not more than 50 cents per horse-power per day. The bulk and weight of a gas engine are about the same as those of an air engine. Illustrations of these engines can be found on page 32, Vol. IV. (new series), *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*.

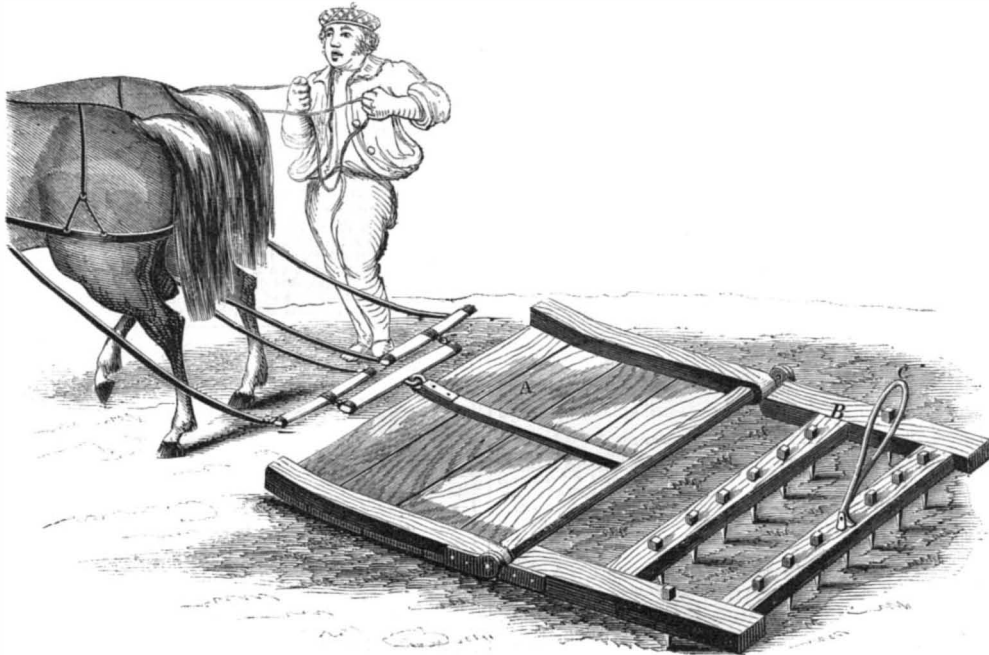
IMPROVED SCHOOL GLOBES.

We have heard old gentlemen of the last generation speak of the great improvements which have been made in modes of teaching since they were boys. For instance, they were set to study geography in the letter-press of a book without the aid of any maps! Notwithstanding the great reform that has been effected in modes of education, we believe that the importance of proper apparatus for teaching is not yet fully appreciated. Children are urged through the difficult task of learning long tables of the distances and sizes of the planets, when a single glance at an orrery properly proportioned would give them a far better idea of the structure of the solar system, and one which they would remember for a life time. Of the large sums of money expended for school books we have no doubt that a much larger proportion should be appropriated to apparatus than is now expended for that purpose.

Our attention has been recalled to this important subject by an examination of some globes recently patented through this office, by the Rev. J. R. Agnew. The celestial globe is formed of two hollow hemispheres, with the constellations mapped upon the concave inside, while an orrery revolves within the sphere, thus giving the pupil a correct idea of the relative positions of the heavenly bodies. The outside of the sphere is a terrestrial globe, and by this arrangement the three things—a celestial globe, a terrestrial globe, and an orrery—are combined and furnished for a little more than the usual price of either, or say for one-half of the usual price of all. In this globe the zodiac is vertical, and all of the arrangements give a better representation of astronomical phenomena than globes of the ordinary construction. The merits of this globe ought to secure its general introduction into the common and select schools, and into all families that can afford it. Mr. Agnew may be addressed for further information to the care of the *American Monthly* office, 37 Park Row, New York City.

Improved Harrow and Clod-crusher.

This machine is a combined harrow and clod-crusher, and is intended to effect its object in a simple and expeditious manner. The construction of it will be readily understood by referring to the appended description. The clod-crusher, A, is a strong frame made either of iron or of wood faced with iron, and is jointed to the harrow, B, behind, so as to move up and down easily. The harrow itself follows the clod-crusher, as may be seen by reference to the engraving,

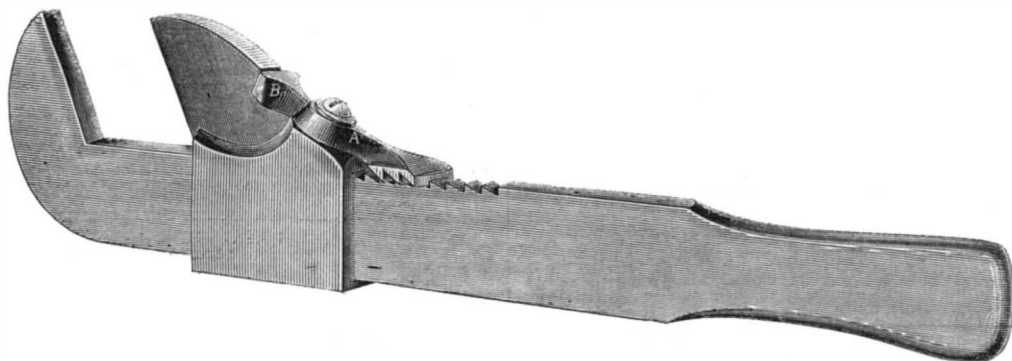
**DUBUISSEN'S HARROW AND CLOD-CRUSHER.**

ing, and is so arranged that when it is desired to use the clod-crusher alone, the harrow can be turned up over the latter, and thus add its weight to the work; this will generally be found sufficient, but if more pressure is required stones can be added as desired. The harrow is furnished with a handle, C, in the rear, so that as occasion demands it can be raised to clear the teeth from weeds and grass that have clogged them. This machine will be found a very useful one for the purpose, and may be used as shown for either harrowing or clod-crushing, in combination or separately.

The invention was patented through the Scientific American Patent Agency on June 30th, 1863, by Geo. W. Dubuisson, of Jerusalem South, Queens county, N. Y. For further information address the inventor at that place, or R. H. Allen & Co., 189 Water street, New York.

Improved Wrench.

The wrench herewith illustrated is one that will recommend itself as a very complete and useful tool.

**SHARP'S ADJUSTABLE WRENCH.**

It can be set most readily to any size, and is very strong in the direction of the greatest strain. It is made light and thin so as to go into a narrow opening, and the body is increased in width so as to compensate for the reduction previously mentioned. The one before us is made of malleable iron, but they can be made of wrought-iron as well. The engraving explains itself so clearly that further comment is almost needless. The reader will see that the brace, A, has a grooved foot that fits into corresponding projections on the handle. The center of the brace is fitted with

a screw as a pivot to turn on. The brace does not fit the screw, but has a slot in it so that the strain comes upon the upper end, B, and there is also a spring washer under the head of the screw which keeps the brace close up to the handle so that it cannot slip when about to be used. The wrench as thus made is a very convenient one, and was patented on Jan. 5th, 1864, through the Scientific American Patent Agency, by H. Sharp, and assigned to Brown & Heal, Factoryville, Staten Island. For further in-

formation address J. M. Brown, 388 Broadway, New York.

Damages of the Sheffield Disaster to be Paid.

The Northern and Eastern counties correspondent of the *London Engineer*, of April 22d, says:—"The Sheffield Waterworks Company held a rather gloomy meeting on Monday. The directors intend to admit the liability of the company, and in order to meet the claims upon them, they propose to ask Parliament for powers to raise £400,000, and to issue a special commission to assess the compensation due to the sufferers by the flood. The chairman briefly referred to the overwhelming calamity that had come upon the company since their last meeting, and stated, on the part of the directors, that they were desirous of satisfying, to the fullest possible extent, consistent with justice, all the claims that could be brought against them. The report recommended that no dividend should be declared. Mr. M'Turk moved that the usual dividend of five per cent., which had been earned previous to Dec. 31st, should be declared. The

law clerk read a clause from the opinion of counsel setting forth that shareholders were liable to the extent of their shares, but not further; and as regarded the question of a dividend, the attorney-general, and other eminent barristers, who had given the opinion, added that the company would act very injudiciously if they divided any sum at present. It was urged in the course of conversation, by those favorable to the declaration of a dividend, that many widows and orphans were dependent upon the annual dividends of the company, and that 'no dividend' meant

to them the extreme of distress and privation; but it was felt that under present circumstances, however great the individual hardships might be and would be in many cases, it would not be right to declare a dividend in the face of the application that is to be made to Parliament. The motion was withdrawn by Mr. M'Turk, and the report of the directors was adopted."

Effect of Vibrations on Iron Girders.

In the *London Artizan* we find a full report of an elaborate series of experiments undertaken by William Fairbairn, LL.D., F.R.S., to ascertain the effect of vibrations on iron girders when subjected to only a portion of the breaking strain. A beam, 16 inches in depth with a clear span of 20 feet, was so arranged that the weight could be let down upon it suddenly, and then caused to vibrate. The experiments commenced March 21, 1860, and continued to Jan. 9, 1862; the changes in the load amounting to upwards of 3,000,000.

Mr. Fairbairn concludes that iron girders in railroad bridges and other places where they are subjected to sudden changes of load and to vibrations, cannot be loaded with safety to one-third of the breaking strain, but that with one-fourth of the breaking strain they will last for hundreds of years.

THE

Scientific American,

FOR 1864!

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