

tallow is very good, and is used to some extent for many quick-running machines. These boxes last a long time and are easily replaced when worn out. A large and heavy screw engine is now building at a machine-shop in this city; the main shaft of this engine runs in cast-iron boxes well lined with Babbitt metal, but no composition of any other kind is fitted to the journal. These two metals work well together when the journals are not very large, but if we are not greatly in error this same arrangement was placed on the engine we alluded to a few lines previously, and caused so much trouble that it had to be taken out and replaced by brass boxes.

Of two evils it is far better to give too much bearing to the working parts of machines than too little, for the repairs in the first instance will bear only a proper relation to the amount of work done, while in the latter they are a continual item of expense.

WILL SUDDEN RELIEF FROM PRESSURE CAUSE BOILER EXPLOSIONS?

Many instances are on record where boilers have been suddenly punched by the bow-sprits of vessels, and thus relieved of great quantities of steam and water in a very short space of time. The *Mound City*, a gunboat on the Mississippi, had a shot through her boilers which caused large volumes of steam to escape, scalding numbers of the crew, yet no explosion followed, the water was not "flashed into steam," neither did it, as theorizers say it should have done, become converted into a huge projectile and dash away the surrounding walls of the boiler like so much paper. Every day a most mischievous practice may be observed in commercial cities; the safety valves of steamers arriving from sea, or from inland waters, are suddenly lifted, and the mighty force pent up in the boiler shoots out into the air with a deafening roar. Is not this a sudden relief of pressure? It is so sudden that the index hand of the steam gage goes back almost as fast as the pulse beats, and ten minutes are enough to blow the steam from the largest boiler. The practice is, as we remarked, a mischievous one, not upon the theory that sudden release of pressure is attended with danger; but because the boiler is unduly strained. The whole force within is directed upon one part and that suddenly, and it is wonderful that so few accidents occur from this practice.

The occasions have been neither few nor far between, during the war and previous to it, where the boilers on gunboats have been pierced with heavy shot. The *Sassacus*, one of the new double-enders, having a large Martin boiler of the same kind as the one which exploded on the *Chenango*, was recently struck with a one-hundred-pound rifled shot which passed entirely through the boiler. The sudden escape of steam scalded many of the crew, but beyond the perforation there was no casualty to the boiler itself. From this, and the other cases we cited, it may be seen that the particular theory queried in the caption of this article must be at fault. Why is it not better in striving to account for boiler explosions to look first at purely mechanical causes? When the piston rod of a steam engine breaks men say it was too weak, or from such and such a specific cause (as water getting in the cylinder, or a follower bolt coming out and getting jammed between the head and piston), a violent strain was put upon it which it was not capable of withstanding. No one thinks of examining the chemistry of heat, of the oil which lubricated it, or of the packing which surrounded it to account for the rupture; and any one who should propose such a course would be looked upon as an idiot by his professional brethren. Because the disengagement of steam from water is both mechanical and chemical, when a boiler bursts some men seem to have passion for diving into the most profound and absurd theories, and descant about matters they know nothing of, when a defective brace or a rotten sheet was most probably the source of all the trouble.

There is great mischief in attributing boiler explosions to obscure causes, for by so doing we make practical engineers, who are not versed in the "mysteries" of their art, believe that all their care is of no avail, and that, precaution or no precaution, an explosion is sure to occur, provided a certain chain of circumstances is produced in the boiler. Let us look first, and earnestly, at the mechanical construction of steam boilers, and if it is settled that no im-

provement can be made in this respect, turn our attention to theories and the tedious discussion of them.

THE SLIP OF PROPELLING INSTRUMENTS.

"Slip" is a technical term, used by marine engineers to designate the receding of the water from the float of a paddle-wheel or the blade of a screw. The float or blade moving against the particles of water in order to obtain a resistance to react in propelling the vessel, obtains this resistance, but at the same time the particles of water do not remain stationary but recede or slip away from the propelling instrument. Hence, on account of this yielding property of water, the propelling instrument must move against a greater number of particles or molecules of water in order to obtain the required amount of resistance. The resistance offered by a single particle of water to a propelling instrument, decreases just in proportion as it yields to the motion of the propelling instrument. If the water did not yield at all, then its resistance would be greatest; but if it yields to the least possible force, then its resistance is of the least possible amount.

Let us illustrate the loss by slip, by means of the following example:—Let the center of pressure of a propelling instrument, have an effective velocity of 120 feet per minute, and the velocity of the vessel be 100 feet per minute. Then, making the following proportion to obtain the loss by slip, we have the loss of speed by slip expressed in per-centage, thus—

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{As the speed of the propelling instrument} = 120 \\ \text{: the difference between this speed and} \\ \text{the speed of the vessel (120—100) = 20} \\ \text{: :} \\ \text{: the slip expressed in per centage = } 16\frac{2}{3} \end{array}$$

Hence, 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ per cent of the speed of the propelling instrument is lost on account of the yielding property of water. However, from this it seems to me to be impossible to deduce that there is 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ per cent of the amount of the power which has been transmitted to the propelling instrument, lost by the water thus yielding or slipping away. This loss of speed simply represents the number of extra particles of water the propelling instrument must come in contact with in order to obtain the required resistance. Or it represents the extra number of revolutions the engine must make, in order to move the propelling instrument against this extra number of particles of water. If the water did not yield in this manner it would require more steam or power to move the engine during each revolution, but as the water does yield or slip away from the propelling instrument, then the power required for each revolution is decreased in nearly the same ratio. Hence, when we can determine the amount of power expended in overcoming the friction, and other resistances of the machinery itself, in causing the propelling instrument to move against this extra number of particles of water, in order to meet with the required resistance, then we can obtain the actual loss of power by slip. Now this amount of power thus expended, would not by any means equal the per centage of the loss of speed by slip as ordinarily estimated.

I have thus endeavored in a few words to give this explanation of the loss of power by slip as I understand it. This is not the generally received theory, however, for it is taught by many of the most prominent marine engineers, that the apparent loss of speed by slip as expressed in per centage, is the true loss by slip of the amount of power which has been transmitted to the propelling instrument. Thus, in our example, it would be said that the loss by slip of the amount of power which has been transmitted to the propelling instrument would be 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ per centum; while I would endeavor to prove that this loss would only be the power expended in overcoming the friction and other resistances of the machinery itself while making the extra revolutions required to make the propelling instrument come in contact with this extra number of particles of water; which loss might possibly be no more than 2 or 3 per cent.

In discussing this subject it should always be borne in mind that the apparent slip of a screw is not the actual slip, as it is well known, that instead of the screw revolving in water at rest, when compared with the water through which the vessel passes, it actually revolves in a body of water dragging after the vessel. Therefore, we must add this progressive motion of the dead water, in which the screw revolves, to the ap-

parent speed of the screw, in order to obtain the actual speed of the screw when compared with the speed of the vessel through the water. It is impossible, or at least quite difficult to obtain anything more than an approximation to this velocity of the drag water in which the screw revolves. Hence it may be observed, how very difficult it is to obtain the actual slip of a screw. In case of the common radial water wheel and feathering wheel, the actual speed of the center of pressure through the water being difficult to obtain on account of the complicated cycloidal motion of which the floats partake, it renders it difficult in the same proportion to calculate their actual slip. Hence it is perfectly safe to be very modest in making nice calculations concerning the actual slip of any propelling instrument, until more is known of the mysteries of their action. If it is difficult to obtain the actual slip, then it is evident that the attempt to obtain the actual per centage of power lost by slip, is rather more difficult, yet most of marine engineers are willing to calculate this loss of power on their thumb-nails, and almost stake their reputations too, on its being correct.

Is this usually received slip theory, then, one of the greatest fallacies taught on the subject of steam propulsion, as Robert Griffiths, that eminent English marine engineer, asserts? Is it not worth while for marine engineers to look this question of slip fairly in the face, and ask themselves if there is not something in it worth thinking about? It has for some time seemed very evident to my mind that there is a far larger per centage of power lost by oblique action, both by the side wheel and the screw, than any one seems to admit. However, I will not attempt to argue this point at present, but simply make this statement for fear any one should think that I assume that either of the propelling instruments now generally used, are more economical in the expenditure of power than is usually estimated. G.

In boring for salt water at Peoria, Illinois, some interesting observations were made. The drill has reached the depth of 770 feet. At 120 feet, a five-foot seam of coal was found; at 207, salt water; at 255, another stratum of coal three feet in thickness; at 317, more salt water, of about the strength of ocean water; at 734 a large stream of water impregnated with sulphur. This water flows upward with such force as to lift the heavy weights attached to the drill, and discharging 75,000 gallons every twenty-four hours. It has been carried in pipes sixty-five feet above the surface, and it is thought can be applied to mechanical purposes.



ISSUED FROM THE UNITED STATES PATENT-OFFICE FOR THE WEEK ENDING MAY 17, 1864.

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42,738.—Grind-stone Dresser.—Robert Barkley & Lewis Semple, Philadelphia, Pa.:

We claim a hand tool consisting of the solid cast-iron wheel, B, having chilled angular teeth, as described, in combination with the forked handle, A, provided with a shoulder, x, on either one or both of its sides, the whole being constructed and combined together as described for the purpose specified.

42,739.—Fire-place.—John S. Blair, Boston, Mass.:

I claim, first, The improved register cap as constructed of a plate, C, provided with a flange, b, as described, and not only having a series of openings, c c, but a register plate or valve, d, applied to such openings, the whole to be used in manner on a grate and within the open fire-place thereof, and so as to operate therewith, substantially as specified.

Second, I claim the register cap, C, constructed in manner and combined with or to be applied to a fire-place, A, and its grate, B, and used for the purpose or objects substantially as hereinbefore explained.

42,740.—Mode of securing Cloth Bushes in Holes.—Charles Bollerman, New York City:

I claim the employment or use of a screw-thread cut in the hole, a,

