

Scientific American.

NEW-YORK, AUGUST, 11, 1855.

The Claims of Inventors.

To excel in anything requires devotion, genius, and enthusiasm. No class of men have displayed, in prosperity and adversity, higher degrees of these qualities than inventors. There are but few who do not appreciate the benefits which have been conferred upon society by modern inventions, and yet while this is true respecting improvements in themselves, it is no less true that the number of those who look from inventions up to their authors, is but small. The locomotive fleeting along its iron track, outstripping the deer in speed, and the beehemoth in power, is the subject of admiration to all who gaze upon it, and it astonishes them to see means apparently so simple accomplishing such results. Little do they think, however, of the many heads that have planned, and the hundreds of hands that have toiled to bring it to its present state of perfection. The lathe which is now carving out the bust of an Empress in the Paris Exhibition, appears so simple in its construction and action, that but very few of the great host witnessing its operations will give a passing thought to its ingenious American inventor, who devoted years of study and patient toil to improve and perfect it. We might thus go on and specify an hundred machines, but time and space would fail us. Our object is to direct attention to the merits and claims of the authors of useful inventions—the improvers of the useful arts—for they are by no means sufficiently appreciated. Some talk of inventions as if they were easy things—mere lucky thoughts—costing nothing; others look upon inventors as men who have mere money-making objects in view in getting out patents and selling them. Inventors do have lucky thoughts, but they are generally the result of many sleepless nights' planning, and years of hard work experimenting. We honor every man who by diligence in business and honesty in dealing acquires a fortune, and surely no men deserve to be better rewarded for their efforts than inventors, for they are public benefactors. But with the most of them, we are positive, money is only a secondary object; there are exceptions, to be sure, but this is the rule. In conversation a short time since with an old inventor, who "has done the State some service" by his improvements, he stated that it often gave him pain to hear inventors spoken of as mere speculators. "The devotee," said he, "to scientific mechanical research, will spend the last dollar he can control to the God-ennobling end of practically demonstrating a favorite theoretical machine on which he has spent years of investigation. Our country owes more to inventors for its greatness than all other causes put together, aside from a religious and virtuous education." He spoke the honest truth.

Some seem to imagine that the study of mechanics and the investigation and construction of useful machinery belong to a lower order of society and of intellect, but this is a great mistake. Look where we will, at the rushing stream with its busy turning wheel, preparing food for the million, or to the whirling spindle and whisking shuttle preparing webs to clothe them, and ask "to whom are we indebted for these?" and the answer comes back, "inventors." Their genius is impressed upon every ship which sails the sea; the graceful bridge that spans "Niagara's waters dark and deep;" yea upon everything employed for ornament and use.

At the present moment there are hundreds of inventors engaged in inventing new machines and improving old ones. Every week a list of patent claims for new improvements is published in our columns, thus giving evidence of the many minds that are busily engaged in advancing science and art. These men are developing the resources of our country, adding to its material prosperity, promoting its interests, and elevating its character.—Amid the turmoil of business the public is liable to overlook their worth in the community. We therefore hope that as their patent claims are read each week in our columns, a feeling of gratitude and respect will arise for each, according to the merits of his invention.

The Mason Testimonial.

In accordance with the intimation given in our paper week before last, we herewith commence the publication of the names of the contributors to the "Mason Testimonial." These receipts are only up to the 3rd inst., when this sheet went to press.

Considering the very brief time which has elapsed since the subject was first broached, and the impossibility to have heard so soon from the more distant or rural districts, the subscriptions thus far received, though not amounting to much in the aggregate, are nevertheless very gratifying. They indicate the existence of a lively interest in the object, and leave us no room to doubt that the final result will be all that any one could wish.

Mr. Shugert, the Treasurer of the fund, in his letter enclosing the list, writes as follows:—"A large number of persons here (Washington) have offered contributions, and will pay them in at any time; but I have requested them not to do so, until the remittances from abroad would sufficiently indicate the success of the project proposed in the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, of complimenting Judge Mason."

We felt certain, from the beginning, that a handsome sum would be contributed in Washington, for there is probably no single locality in the country where Judge Mason has a more numerous host of warm and appreciative friends than in that city. When to their subscriptions are added those of the various officers and employees of the Patent Office, the sum total will already have swelled to a very respectable amount. We noticed that when the late Commissioner of Pensions, Mr. Waldo, retired from Office, the employees in that department, presented him with a very beautiful testimonial. Of course the Patent Office folks will not suffer themselves to be outdone under similar circumstances.

We would remind our readers that the ball is now fairly opened, and the opportunity is before them for testifying, in a delicate but enduring manner, their sense of the eminent services rendered to them, to inventors, and to the whole country, by an honest, faithful, and patriotic man—Charles Mason, of Iowa, late Commissioner of Patents. Such a token will form a way-mark in the history of the American Patent Office, the recollection of which will be alike gratifying to the recipient and to the authors.

By reference to the annexed list, it will be observed that contributors are not limited to any particular amount. Let no one hesitate on account of the smallness of their sums. The aggregate will count up faster than they are aware.

Subscriptions should be sent by mail directed to "S. T. Shugert, Esq., Acting-Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D. C.," who is the Treasurer of the Testimonial fund. Those of our subscribers who are about to renew their subscriptions to the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, may, for convenience, send money for the above fund to us, if they desire; we will duly forward all such amounts.

The names and residences of all contributors to the "Mason Testimonial," will be published in the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. To save trouble to the Treasurer, no other acknowledgment of moneys will be made.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE "MASON TESTIMONIAL."

NAME.	RESIDENCE.	AMOUNT.
ANDREW INGLIS,	Philadelphia, Pa.,	\$1.00
CHAS. W. FELT,	Salem, Mass.,	1.00
WM. BALLARD,	New York,	3.00
MUNN & CO.,	"	50.00
R. W. FENWICK,	"	3.00
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A. R. HAIGHT,	"	5.00
R. BOELEN,	"	2.00
R. MACFARLANE,	"	5.00
J. W. COOMBS,	"	2.00
J. G. MASON,	"	1.00
Total received to Aug. 2, 1855.		\$81.00

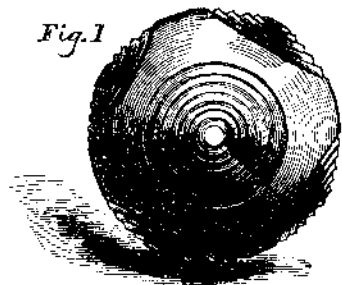
To Our Brethren of the Press and Others.

We would remind our editorial friends and others that the present volume of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN is drawing to a close, and we desire them to look at their files and see if any of its numbers are missing. If so we shall be happy to supply the wanting copies. We should be glad to receive early notice in every case, for after the volume is closed we shall not, probably, be able to supply odd numbers.

Patent Safe Game.

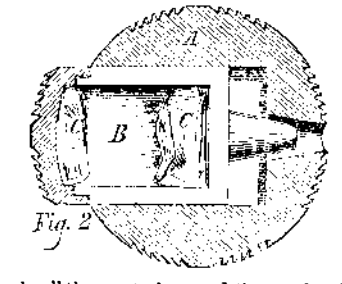
There are but few who have not read in the daily papers of persons coming from the country, to our city, being "taken in and done for" by what is called "the Patent Safe Game," and as no idea of what the game is can be obtained from the mere statement of the fact, we present the following illustration and description of it, in order to inform our people in the country fully of the matter, because cases are constantly transpiring of honest unsuspecting countrymen being fleeced by the very game of which they have heard so much. The sharpers who practice the "patent safe game" are keen fellows, and try to maintain an appearance the very reverse of rogues. Three confidants generally play the game, but two can do it. When they

Fig. 1



see a person called by them a "Sucker," who appears to be a fit subject to play upon, they learn his name, and something about him, such as the place where he came from, &c. (they have various ways of doing this, one of which is by searching the hotel register,) one of them, who is called the "Roper," goes up to him, names him familiarly, and shakes him by the hand. This at first rather astonishes the stranger, but the "Roper" looks so innocent, and is so obliging and kind, that he soon disarms his suspicion, and gains his confidence. He then invites him to go and see the wonderful places about the city, and walks about until he arrives at a proper place, where Mr. "Roper," by looking down on the ground, discovers, accidentally, of course, a little neatly turned wooden ball, represented by fig. 1, which he picks up, and gazing upon it with a look of intense curiosity, he says meditatively to his dupe, "Well this is really a queer thing; I wonder what it can be used for," and pressing it all round, to his apparent surprise, out he pushes an interior plug, (B,) of A, fig. 2 (a section view.) With well assumed wonder he says, "Ah, what is this?" and pulls it out entirely, unscrewing its lid.—"A nice little box; well, now, this is ingenious; and it has something in it too." He then takes out a piece of white paper, (C,) shows

Fig. 2



"Sucker" the empty box, and throws the piece of paper on the ground. There is another piece of paper, (C,) in the small chamber at the other end of the plug, but "Sucker" does not see this, and the plug is put back in its place.

A man is now noticed coming towards them attentively examining the ground, with despair depicted on his countenance. He attracts the "Roper's" attention, who says to his dupe companion, "This man has lost something valuable, let us put some questions to him."

"You appear to be troubled in mind, sir; have you lost anything?" "Yes, sir, I have lost something that I would not have parted with for ten thousand dollars. I had spent years in inventing a new safe for fires, which I know would save millions worth of property, and was on my way to Messrs. Holmes & Butler's, the safe makers, to get one made; but, alas! I have lost the model! It had the appearance of a small carved wooden ball; oh, sir what shall I do." "Roper" says feelingly and honest-like aside to "Sucker," "I can stand this no longer, it pains me to see him. Friend," says he to the afflicted safe loser, "I think I know where it is," and taking it out of his pocket, asks, "Is this your model safe?" "It is, it is, thank you,

thank you," exclaims the overjoyed Safe-man. "But how," says Roper, "can such a thing as that answer for a safe." "Oh, I put a prop under it, and when a fire takes place the support has but to be knocked away, and out it rolls down an incline into the street." "By all the powers," says "Roper," "that is a capital idea. I suppose you have it made to hold something." "Oh, yes, there is a box inside of it, and a paper in its chamber now."

"I don't believe that," says Roper (and aside to "Sucker" he whispers, "I'll bet him on that piece of paper.") "I'll bet there is no paper in it."

"How much will you bet. I'll put up \$1000." "I have not that much," (aside to "Sucker," "I'll take \$100 from him,") "but I'll bet \$100," and he takes out a number of bills, perhaps \$50, and a bank check for other \$50, and says to "Sucker" (for he has found out how much he has,) "will you loan me bills for this check until we get to my hotel?"

All this has been done so honest and fair-like, that "Sucker" pulls out his pocket book, gives accomplished "Roper" \$50 in bills, and takes his check. Then the Safe-man presses on the conical end of the plug, (B,) takes it out, and from the other end pulls out the other piece of paper, (C.) The thing is done, and the Safe-man having fairly won the bet, marches off with the money. The "Roper" looks sad and crest-fallen, but is soon relieved of his grief, for up comes a person assuming to be a policeman, charges them with gambling, and makes a grab at them. "Roper" shouts "run" to his companion, and takes to his heels, but poor "Sucker" is held by the officer, and denying the imputation of gambling, solicits to be let go. This the policeman allows when in his fright "Sucker" flies the city, and soon finds out that his check is worthless; that the Safe-man, Policeman, and "Roper," were colleagues, and he the dupe of the patent safe game.

Important to Inventors—Another \$10,000 Prize.

More than a year ago we chronicled the liberal offer of \$10,000 bona-fidely proposed to be paid by Mr. Moses S. Beach, proprietor of the New York Sun, for the patent right for an invention that could supersede hand labor in feeding blank sheets of paper into the printing press. We believe that offer still remains open, and the end in view unaccomplished.

We have now to record the offer of another prize of the same amount, for an entirely different invention. We subjoin the proposal as received by us:—

"MESSRS. EDITORS—If you think proper, please give notice through the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN that an invention is wanted that will saw two sides of a tapering slab for monuments, both at the same time. Whoever does this makes his fortune. I will give \$10,000 for the patent right. M. M. MANLY. South Dorset, Vt., July 23, 1855.

[To save competitors unnecessary trouble, we hope they will carefully observe that Mr. Manly proposes to pay the sum named after the patent is obtained, and not sooner. Therefore none need bore him with letters announcing that they have made the desired discovery, and demanding the reward before ever they have even tested their alleged invention, or taken any steps to secure the patent right.

Personally we are unacquainted with Mr. Manly. We would state, however, that he is a member of the firm of Manly Brothers, who are, we understand, pretty extensively engaged in the marble business, and have a quarry of their own in Vermont. His offer appears to be a "manly" one, at any rate, and we have no doubt it will call out the desired improvement. The remark in the above letter that "whoever does this makes his fortune," we think is correct, prize or no prize. Let all those who have leisure moments to spend in thinking, remember these two noble prizes. They are open alike to the poor and the rich—to the unlearned and the lettered. In times past the best inventions have generally originated with the poor and uneducated. That it will be so in the future there can be little doubt, for now as ever, "Necessity is the mother of invention."

Rail Road trains will yet be running at the rate of 100 miles per hour; that is our opinion.