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J. H. T., of N. Y.-If a cannon were moving breech foremost through the air at the rate of 1,000 feet per second, and should be discharged with a force that would move the ball in relation to the cannon 1,000 feet a second, the ball would fall yertically to the earth.
C. D., of Maine- $\boldsymbol{\Delta}$ sks the following question-" If I patent a machine and dispose of the right, and then make an im-
provement which I also patent, does that improvement belong to provement which I also patent, does that improvement belong to me or to the purchaser of the original patent, and an the pur chaser use the improvement; without my consent !" We answer Unless there is a previous agreement by which the patentee stipu lates to convey all subsequent improvements made by him, he would no one could use it without his consent.
O. C. M., of N. J.-We have been interested in your statement of your troubles with your small propeller. You say that the boiler is perfectly clean, but although it was once large enough, it will not now make sufficient steam for your engine The trouble must be in the latter then, for if all the conditions ar the same with the boiler, as they were originally it will continue to act well. It is very likely that the engine is in fault. Try the pis ton and sec if it leaks. Examine the valve and see if it sets la on its seat; see that the eccentric has not shifted. Your exlaus pipe is too small at any rate. It should be one and a balf times the area of the steam pipe. Do not narrow it at the mouth; let be straight. It ought to work quite as well, if not better on a small
sult. sult.
. P. W., of Mass.-Very little power is obtained from a Barker-mill steam engine except with high pressure. We should suppose, however, that you could produce sulfient blast for chemist's fire with an engine similar to the one described but con structed of thicker metal. The arms should be sword-shaped; this might be effected by enclosing the iron tubular arms in swor shaped sleeves. The openings sbould be very small, perlaps the 10)th of an inch in meter.
H. C. A., of Ohio.-You will tind full instructions for making all the solutions used in electro-plating in "Smee"s Electro Metallurgy," published by John Wiley, of this city.
R. F., of Ind.-In the Hecker \& Waterman experiments a slide valve is used, worked by an excentric.
W. L. C., of Md.-The dimensions of the engrine in the Hecker \& Waterman experiments were stated in our last volume, page 377. The cylinder is ten inches in diameter with two feet stroke. As the object of the experiments is to test the quand diffequirel to do a given amount or cut-off is fixed at a certain point for each thirty hours run
P. P., of N. Y.-The specimen you send us is a very good article of plumbago. Most of the mining companies in this city are perfect swipdles. We would suggest to you to advertise part of the mine extensively and scll it at auction.
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#### Abstract

\section*{Improved Water-wheel.}

This wheel is claimed to be a very great improvement in ordinary wheels. It is intended to utilize the force of the fall to the utmost, and the chief peculiarity lies in the shape of the buckets. These, it will be seen, are wood, and they are designed, says the inventor in his specification, to obtain the power of the water as it enters the wheel, and also by re-acting against the lower or bottom parts of the buckets to save what is generally lost by the water escaping too quickly. The construction of the wheel is similar to that of any oth in all of them for the the buckets. These latter are set upon a disk, A, they have given them. shoot with them at a target for nuts; and, thirdly, by poor men for sporting purposes, who are tempted to buy them on account of their cheapness. "Unlike the best percussion caps sold by all respectable gunsmiths, they are composed of a very brittle metal, which, in the explosion of the detonating material within, is apt to splinter, and the fragments fly off with a most dangerous rapidity. They may be purchased at the rate of 500 for 1 s . Each year I see patients who have been the victims to these miserable toys. Parents in perfect innocence buy




LUTHER'S RE-ACTING WATER-WHEBL.
which is carried by a step, $B$. The wheel and case, $C$, which is of scroll form, sets in a penstock, $D$, and the water enters to $A$ as usual. There are openings in the side of the scroll which deflect the water to the buckets so that it impinges directly upon them, horizontally. The top of the buckets are curved slightly so as to concentrate the force directly upon the most effective portion of the wheel, and as the current in its passage seeks to escape at the bottom, it re-acts upon the inclined or helical portion $E$, of the bucket, and thus adds its weight and the velocity it may have acquired in its passage, to the former impetus obtained by striking horizontally against the bucket.
It is asserted that this plan of wheel is a very efficient one, and it has been patented in the United States, and in England and France.
The patents were all obtained through the Scientific American Patent Agency. The American patent bears date Feb. 17, 1863. For further particulars address the patentees, Jacob Luther \& Co., Anamosa, Iowa.

## Dangerous Percussion Caps.

"A Surgeon to a London Hospital" has called the attention of the public to the danger of using cheap and bad percussion caps. "Many eyes," he writes, " are entirely lost every year by them. They are used, first, very largely by children in their toy-guns and pistols; secondly, by others more advanced in years, who at fairs and other places of public resort
"In the explosion of the cap a small speculum of the metal flies off, and strikes the eye of the person shooting, or that of a bystander, inflicting in its rapid transit either a dangerous wound, or else lodging itself deeply in the eye.
"Of all the eyes I have seen thus irreparably destroyed, and they are many, I have, on a careful cross-examination of the patients, or of the patient's immediate relatives, ascertained that the percussion caps used were cheap, and consequently bad."
The publication of the above in the columns of the London Times called forth the following statement from "A Volunteer:"-
"The percussion caps supplied with the ball cartridges issued the last two years to Volunteer corps, on exploding, are attended with exactlysimilar results as the supposed cheap caps described by your correspondent. Instead of, as formerly, expanding only upon explosion, the caps now fly into two or three, or even flve pieces. I was standing a few days since about three yards to the right of a friend while firing kneeling, and was struck by a piece of an exploded cap, which cut through my trousers and fetched blood. I found the piece adhering to the cloth.
"On another occasion I saw a man struck twice in the course of an hour in the face, while firing, laying his cheek open."

Shence in Nature.-It is a remarkable and very instructive fact, that many of the most importan
perations of nature are carried on in unbroken silenee. There is no rushing sound when the broad tide of sunlight breaks on a dark world and floods it with light, as one bright wave over another falls from the fountain, millions of millions of miles away. There is no creaking of axles, or groaning of cumbrous machinery as the solid earth wheels on its way, and every planet and system performs its revolutions. The great trees bring forth their boughs and shadow the earth benoath them-the plants cover themselves with buds, and the buds burst into flowers, but the whole transaction is unheard. The change from snow and winter winds to blossoms and fruits and the sunshine of summer is seen in its slow development, but there is scarcely a sound to tell of the mighty transformation. The solemn chant of the ocean, as it raises its unchanged and its unceasing voices, the roar of tbe hurricane and the mighty river, and the thunder of the black-browed storm; all this is the music of nature-a great and swelling anthem of praise, breaking in on the universal calm. There is a lesson for us here. The mightiest worker in the universe is the most unobtrusive.-Brakus.

Shor cast in cold sand molds are coming into use for their cheapness and destructive effect.-Plit. Ledger.
Shot are always cast in cold sand molds. Our contemporary alludes to iron molds, probably, which chill the exterior of the easting, thus making it harder.

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