

Patent Cases in Congress.—The Woodworth Planing Machine.

We publish *in extenso* the following letter from the *New York Herald*. It will be read with deep interest, as it completely uncovers the whole scheme. The most expressive commentary we can utter is that it emits a most foul and disgusting odor:—

"In my last, alluding to the schemes before Congress, I briefly sketched the merits of the Hayward Sulphur bill, and touched upon McCormick's application to Congress for a revival of an expired patent, and the attempt to procure a renewal of the Colt Pistol Patent.

None of these bills exceed the Woodworth Planing Machine Patent in the richness of their gold mines. The patent for the Woodworth machine expired on the 27th of this month (Dec.), after having been renewed by the Commissioner of Patents, and still further by the special legislation of Congress. It has existed for nearly thirty years, and notwithstanding the immense profits of the monopoly, its owners are insatiate, and desire its further continuance. Mr. Woodworth, the son of the inventor, and one of the present proprietors of the patent, has addressed an autograph letter to several Members of Congress, making, of course, an *ex parte* statement, and appealing for 'relief.' In this letter he says:—

'The assignees are unanimously in favor of a further extension; therefore, as I understand it, there is no one opposed to the extension.'

On its face it seems that if the parties who now pay for using the patent are in favor of its extension, the public cannot object to it. A slight explanation will put a different complexion upon the matter, however, and show that the fact of the assignees being in favor of the scheme, is one of its worst features—it being nothing more than a conspiracy to continue taxing the public for the benefit of a combined monopoly, as I will demonstrate.

The principal parties who own the Woodworth Planing Machine Patent are Jas. G. Wilson, Edward Bloomer, and Wm. W. Woodworth. As a general thing they do not manufacture the machines themselves. They sell the right to manufacture and use them in districts throughout the United States, charging in addition so much for every board planed, and not permitting the boards made in one district to be sent to another. Thus the person who purchases a right for North Carolina, for instance, cannot manufacture the yellow pine of that region and send it North for use. It is easy to see that if this could be done, he could sell his boards cheaper in New York than the man who transports the timber in the rough, and manufactures it into boards there; for the latter has to pay the freight on all the waste lumber before it is dressed whilst the former would have none of this expense—an expense, by the way, which comes out of the pockets of the consumers, according to the Woodworth Company arrangement. Here at once it is seen that all competition is cut off between the different leases of the machines—a competition which could be beneficial to the public.

These different 'assignees,' as Mr. Woodworth terms them—that is, persons who have purchased district rights—were heretofore found troublesome when the company desired an extension of the patent, because all leases expire with the extension, and the parties in question had no interest in desiring a continuance of the monopoly. This opposition has been done away with by the Woodworth Company agreeing to renew all the leases upon the same or better terms, whilst all persons who might hereafter purchase rights are to be charged a higher sum and a larger tariff upon the boards worked up. The result will be that the present holders of rights will become, as it were, partners in the monopoly to the extent of the difference between what they are to pay for using the patent, and what will be charged to the public who may desire licenses. It is an exceedingly pleasant arrangement, and at once accounts for the 'universal' favor which Mr. Woodworth asserts exists on the part of the 'assignees' for a further extension of the patent. The wording of the agreement in question is somewhat indefinite, and one of the 'assignees' becoming alarmed, has let the secret out.

Besides this, blanks have been sent to the

different assignees to fill up, pledging themselves to pay a certain sum in order to secure the passage of the extension by Congress. The sums vary according to the value of the districts. The blank I have seen was filled up with \$250. How much has been raised in this way it is impossible to ascertain, but it is said that \$500,000 is the sum; and in view of the immense value of such an extension to the parties interested, the amount is probably not exaggerated.

There is one other feature in the transactions of this company which is deserving of notice. In consequence of the immense wealth acquired under the patent, its owners are able to crush all efforts to make other machines which may do the work as well or better. Thus the moment the attempt is made, a suit is commenced for an infringement, and in nine cases out of ten the frightful costs of such a suit are sufficient to deter the poor inventor from entering the lists against such aggregated wealth. But if—as in some cases has happened—the parties fight it out, and establish the novelty of their invention, and their right to use it, the Woodworth monopoly at once buy it up, and that is the last of it. Thus Daniel Barnum, of Philadelphia, succeeded in inventing a planing machine which the courts decided was not an infringement of the Woodworth patent, and the latter company immediately purchased the Barnum patent and buried it. Mr. Beardsley, of New York, was also silenced in the same way. This monster company, it will thus be seen, swallows up all other inventions, either by crushing suits and enormous bills of costs, or, if that fails, then, by the aid of its vast moneyed resources, it purchases them.

The further continuance of this monopoly directly affects the interests of every man within the United States. It has been protected by the government for 28 years, and it is now sought by a combination of interests and the wealth of the parties engaged in it to perpetuate the tax. Its extension will embrace the cost of buildings, and as a consequence, rents also. The poorest man in the country is thus made to pay his quota towards sustaining the monopolists. The plan which has been adopted of creating a large fund to secure its passage, affects no less the honor of Congress than the interests of the people. Two dollars a thousand feet is now charged for planing. The instant this bill passes, \$4 will be the price.

Several of the State Legislatures have at different periods sent remonstrances to Congress against the further extension of this patent. Of late the matter has been kept so quiet that suspicion has been lulled. As the patent expires on the 27th, great exertions will be made to get the bill passed at once, and those, therefore, who are opposed to it should lose no time in sending in their remonstrances. It is probable nothing but the most energetic course can arrest the scheme."

Seeing Stars.—A Deceptional Reflecting Telescope.

MESSERS. EDITORS.—In a late number of the *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*, a correspondent—"Vulcan," of Cambridge, Mass.—tells us how to observe the satellites of Jupiter with an ordinary looking-glass; but he is mistaken. It is easy to see how he has been deceived. Take a common looking-glass, and the more untrue its surface the better it is to make moons with, whether they be Jupiter's or your neighbor's light in a window at some distance off. Get the planet to enter at a very obtuse angle and you will see what might, at first sight, be taken for the moons; but gradually bring the planet to enter at an angle as acute as your head will permit, and you will see the supposed moons gradually approach the planet, so that if you could get the light of it through your head, so as to go in and out of the glass perpendicular to it, there would be no moons left. The reason why these moons appear, is simply because the surface of the glass is not perfectly flat, and the surfaces parallel one with the other. You get the bright reflection of the planet from the quicksilver side, and the dim moons, as you may call them, from the upper surface.

If "Vulcan" will get a good parallel reflecting glass, such as are used in quadrants

or sextants, and then see Jupiter's moons in it, he will do more than has yet been done with the naked eye. J. O. Bloomfield, N. J., Jan., 1857.

Natural Curiosities of New Zealand.

One of the most remarkable features of the island of New Zealand—situated in the South Pacific, and the property of Great Britain—is the numerous warm and hot springs and lakes, geysers, &c., which exist there, in connection with the volcano of Tongariro, in the central part of the northern division of the island. In the neighborhood of this volcano is Lake Tanpo, thirty-six miles long, on the shores of which are numerous hot boiling springs and ponds of warm water, which the natives enjoy for bathing purposes. The temperature in them ranges from 95° to 125° Fah. The water of the lake itself steams in the neighborhood of the shore. One or two inches below the surface the thermometer is often 110° Fah., but lower down sinks to 60°. Close to the hot springs there are very strong cold saline ones. This large assemblage of springs covers an area of about ten square miles, and the entire area seems to be only a thin crust over subterranean and volcanic caverns. This crust is about a foot in thickness; below is a grey, soft, and generally hot mud. It often happens that this crust breaks in, and dreadful scaldings not unfrequently occur. Here may be seen the process of decomposition of volcanic rocks going on, and the separation of the aluminous earth or clay, by means of the subterranean vapor and hot water.

The natives make a peculiar use of some of the warm springs which abound in this region. They surround them with stones, and thus form a basin in which they are continually sitting. They make a new application of the seat or hip bath, by using it in the place of a fire, jumping in as often as they feel cold. The practice does not seem to hurt them, they being remarkably healthy in appearance.

The Ambrotype Art.

A writer in the *Journal of Commerce* gives some interesting facts concerning the art of photography. He states that but a short time ago there were one hundred and fifty daguerreotype rooms in this city, employing on an average five persons; but now, by the introduction of new processes not easily attainable, many of the old operators are irretrievably ruined. He asserts that the finer texture and subdued coloring of the plate glass ambrotype led to the relinquishment of the metallic plate, so that the unnatural glare of the latter was avoided, the effect produced being more like that of a fine engraving. Another advantage is that the impression is taken instantaneously, so that the features are not disturbed by fatigue or impatience.

Small ambrotype pictures are taken in some establishments for 25 cents; but they are very indifferent pictures. We do not agree with the above remarks respecting the common pictures taken on glass; although they are now very common, and have superseded the daguerreotype in a great measure; they appear to us to be inferior in almost every respect to the daguerreotype. Photographs taken on paper are more beautiful than those taken on glass, or on metal plates, and we are glad to perceive that our artists are improving in this delightful branch of sun painting.

Merit Rewarded.

Thomas Clark, Esq., favorably known to the city press as the gentlemanly manager and superintendent of the Newspaper Department in the City Post Office, received on New Year's Day a substantial token of the appreciation in which he is regarded by his fellow employees in that establishment. The present consisted of a solid silver tea service properly inscribed, and elaborately ornamented. This token is particularly gratifying to Mr. Clark as it was, we are informed, entirely unexpected on his part. We may add that the compliment was bestowed upon a most worthy gentleman.

A huge bust of Minerva has been dug up at Rome; its nose is sixteen inches long. It is stated to be a great work of ancient art.

American Iron Manufacture.

The *United States Gazette* (Philadelphia) states that 439,186 tons of iron were manufactured in Pennsylvania in 1856. This amount is classified as follows:—

278,941 tons were anthracite pig iron; 66,970 hot blast charcoal pig iron; 56,225 cold blast charcoal pig iron; 24,550 coke pig iron; 12,500 raw bituminous coal pig iron. Of finished iron there were manufactured 227,837 tons, comprising 121,550 tons of nails, rods, and bars; 82,107 tons of rails; 21,505 tons of sheets and plate; 2,675 tons of hammered bars.

The *Gazette* says:—"The iron produced in the United States for the same period is estimated at one million of tons; consequently our State contributes nearly one half of the domestic supply. During that period the whole country consumes 1,386,000 tons, one-third of which was furnished from Pennsylvania. It is conjectured, on the basis of such facts as could be searched out by a gentleman pre-eminently versed in this subject, that the sum total of iron manufactured in all countries fifty years ago, did not exceed 500,000 tons—a trifles over the present production of this State.

Our manufacture equals that of England in the year 1823, although in England the business had been in progressive operation at that time for more than one hundred and fifty years. The yield in Great Britain for the past year was, in round numbers, three and a half millions of tons; the production of Pennsylvania was, therefore, nearly one-seventh of that stupendous and almost incredible amount, a fact gratifying in itself, and full of promises for our future. With the exception of Great Britain, France alone, of all the European countries, produces a larger amount of iron than our own State. It made 650,000 tons in 1855. Prussia comes next, having made 400,000 tons in that year; and Russia is still further behind, its production having amounted to no more than 300,000 tons."

It is certainly very gratifying intelligence respecting the rapid progress of a branch of manufacture upon which all the arts are so dependant. In ten years from the present date more iron, we believe, will be manufactured annually in our country than in England

Statuary for the Capitol.

A correspondent of the *Commercial Advertiser*, at Rome, gives a description of the fine statuary in Crawford's studio, designed for the Capitol at Washington, and for private citizens. The statue of "America," to be placed in the lofty dome, is twenty feet high, and stands with the right hand resting on a sheathed sword, and the left on the shield of our country. On the breast are the initials of the United States, and a delicate drapery is so arranged as to form rays of light proceeding from the letters. The ample folds of an outer drapery fall majestically around the statue, leaving only the hands and a portion of the neck uncovered. For the usual cap, the artist has substituted a helmet, the crest of which is an eagle's head, with a richly falling plume of feathers. The countenance is wondrously beautiful, full of dignity and purpose, earnestly and thoughtfully looking out into the great future."

The statue of an "Indian," intended for the eastern pediment, is a nude figure, expressive of profound grief for the death of his nation. The anatomy and repose of the figure are admirable; but the great speechless woe that bows the head upon one open palm, while the other hand is clenched in agony, is a triumph of art.

Several bas reliefs for the bronze doors of the Capitol, representing national events, are to be cast at the Munich foundries.

More Camels.

The U. S. storeship Supply has again gone out to the Mediterranean for a cargo of camels, and will stop for them at Smyrna. Mr. Heep is engaged in selecting the best kind for transportation to Texas, and the Turkish government has ordered the officials at Smyrna to furnish him with every facility, and to give him six of the finest camels in the country to show the respect felt by the Sultan for the United States.