

causes such a flow of blood to the head of the divers that it is intolerable.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

The President—Pardon-seekers—Condition of the Patent Office—The New Appointment—The New Commissioner—Changes in the Law, Etc.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 23, 1865.

This city has experienced a miraculous change since my last visit. The shoulder-strap gentry, soldiers, flying artillery, the long trains of army wagons, mules, contrabands, and other adjuncts of sanguinary war, have mainly disappeared, and "the city of hacks and magnificent distances" is now restored to the custody of its citizens and office-holders, attended by the usual crowd of hungry office-seekers, and bidders for contracts. Great activity prevails throughout all the departments in anticipation of the early assembling of Congress, at which time, and to which body, the various officials will have to render an account of their stewardship. The man most envied, and most to be pitied, is Andrew Johnson, President of these United States. Though possessed of an iron constitution, capable of great endurance, he has not that elastic element in his nature, which afforded so much relief to his lamented predecessor, who, like William, Prince of Orange, bore the sorrows of a nation upon his shoulders with a smile upon his face. On three different occasions I went to the old White House to see the President for a few minutes upon some important business connected with the Patent Office. Each time I found the halls and ante-rooms, adjoining his private office, thronged with anxious men and women, who either wished to look at, or to get an interview with, His Excellency. By the exercise of a little extra patience and perseverance, on my third visit I succeeded in reaching him. At these interviews, as a matter of courtesy, the women have precedence of the men. Standing near to the person of the President I had a good opportunity, in open court, to learn the nature of several interviews which were accorded to the fair sex. The first one who had the honor of an audience, was a very plainly dressed, elderly woman, attended by a charming creature, who acted as spokeswoman. She interceded with the President in soft, mellifluous tones, for the release of a son of her elder companion, who was pining in durance vile in some government fortress. The President seemed to be moved by the appeal, but replied that in the absence of sufficient knowledge of the case he could not extend Executive clemency. "Surely," said the fair advocate, "you will not refuse me this pardon?" to which the President promptly replied, "I had rather grant twenty pardons than to refuse one," at the same time referring the parties to the Attorney-General. Next in order came a nicely dressed miss, with face closely veiled, carrying in her hand a small package of papers. She seemed not to wish any one but the President to understand the nature of her errand, but from some remarks that fell from his lips, I soon learned that she was seeking pardon for a somewhat aged West Pointer, who had, in some unexplained way, aided the rebellion. The President inquired of her who had examined the case? She replied that Gen. Grant had looked at the papers. The President instantly directed one of his clerks to see what the illustrious man of war had said about it, whereupon the paper was produced, which bore the indorsement of Gen. Grant to the effect that "the case was one of a numerous class well understood by the President." His Excellency then inquired of the young advocate what reason she had for urging the pardon. She replied that the party was anxious to go into some business, and, moreover, that he was deaf. At once the President assured her, that the lack of pardon did not prevent him from going into business, and to grant one would not restore his hearing, at the same time referring her case to the Attorney-General. There were at least twenty women and one hundred men waiting for audience. The President, though affable to all, seemed firm in his purpose not to extend clemency without a clear knowledge of such facts as would warrant its exercise. It is said to be a favorite scheme with many, who are excluded by the terms of the amnesty proclamation, to employ the services of women to present

their cases to the President. These applicants evidently think that mercy

"Becomes the monarch better than his crown."

The situation is certainly far from being an agreeable one to either party.

The President, though appearing quite well, nevertheless exhibits a care-worn and anxious expression. His labors are excessive, and, from motives of mere curiosity, visitors ought not to force their attentions upon him, and just now especially, while he has so many burdens to bear; besides, the White House is a dirty old place, and is not fit for his residence.

I made a somewhat careful examination into the
CONDITION OF THE PATENT OFFICE.

It is the noblest building, architecturally speaking, in Washington. It was originally founded exclusively for a Patent Office, but, upon the creation of the Department of the Interior, its offices were located in the Patent Office building, and the affairs of the office were subordinated to the Interior Department.

The SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN earnestly protested against this arrangement, and the wisdom of this protest is now made as clear as a sunbeam, to all who have taken note of the wonderful progress which has marked the history of invention during the past ten years.

The Patent Office is now finished according to the original plans. Over \$400,000 of the patent fund have been absorbed in its construction, while the office itself has paid all its legitimate expenses out of its receipts. If the business of the office continues for ten years at the same ratio of increase as in the past five years, every available foot of this immense structure will be required for its purposes; and it is to be hoped, in view of this patent fact, that before the close of the next Congress a bill will be passed to establish the Patent Office on an independent basis, and that a proper building for the Interior Department will be authorized. Fifty thousand patents have already been granted, to say nothing of the large number of rejected cases. Models are now rapidly accumulating, and, much sooner than many suppose, the cases now fitted for their reception will be filled. Either the exaction of models must be soon dispensed with or more room will have to be appropriated for their proper care.

Considerable surprise has been expressed that the President should have so long neglected to appoint a suitable person to fill the vacancy in the Board of Appeals, considering the great accumulation of cases before that Board.

Mr. Theaker, formerly a member of the Board, is now Commissioner of Patents. Mr. Coombs resigned some months ago, and has resumed the practice of law in Washington, Mr. Hodges of the old Board alone remained. Judge Foote, a most excellent and competent man, has just entered upon the duties of the Board, and will do good service. Four chief examiners in the Patent Office—Dr. Page, Mr. Blanchard, Mr. Peale, and Dr. Doane—were applicants for this position, and were each strongly recommended by their friends, but I understand that the President has at last found the right man for the right place, in the person of Mr. Fessenden of Maine, brother of Senator Fessenden, to fill the vacancy.

Respecting the new incumbent, I have been unable to learn anything definite as to his qualifications. He belongs to a family distinguished for ability and practical good sense. The Board has plenty of legal ability, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Fessenden will bring to its aid the mind of a well-instructed and experienced mechanic.

THE NEW COMMISSIONER.

Commissioner Theaker possesses a full and thorough knowledge of his duties. He well deserves the confidence and cheerful support of the whole clerical force of the office. No man who has ever filled that important chair brings to its duties a higher purpose to discharge its trust more faithfully and earnestly; and now that the vacancy in the Board of Appeals is filled, I trust that he will reclassify the whole business of the office, so that the labors may be more equitably distributed.

Some of the examiners are overworked, for want of proper assistants, while others have not enough to do; hence, while in some classes the work is well up, in others there is an unusual accumulation of

cases. If there are any drones in the hive they ought to be expelled, and it would be an act of well-merited justice to promote some of the assistant examiners who have so long and faithfully discharged the duties of principals.

I trust that the Commissioner will resolutely use his influence to promote these much needed reforms and changes. The duties of chief clerk are now ably performed by Thomas Harland, Esq., of Norwich, Conn.

I understand that Mr. Jenckes, who was Chairman of the House Committee on Patents during the last Congress, and who is quite likely to occupy the same position in the next Congress, is now engaged in preparing a bill designed to establish the Patent Office as an independent bureau, and also to secure some other changes in the law of patents.

I do not know what Mr. Jenckes contemplates in the way of changes in the law, but trust he will act in such matters in consultation with the Commissioner. This would insure inventors against radical changes in the present admirable system of granting patents.

The business of the office was never so large as now. During the month of October 628 patents were issued, and upward of 500 will probably issue during the month of November. I think the records will show that fully one-third of the whole were clients of the Scientific American Patent Agency—the balance being divided between hundreds of local agencies in the various cities of the Union. ***

New Chain Machine.

A novel and ingenious invention has been brought out in England by which the production of chains is greatly facilitated, at the same time that the strength of the article is increased, and the price reduced. The process may be described as follows:—The end of the bar of iron, as it comes hot from the rolls, is placed in the machine, which coils it upon a mandrel, having the shape of the inside of the link required. A sliding rest, moved by a screw, distributes the bar of iron upon the mandrel, forming what is technically called a helical coil, having a 3-inch pitch. By a simple arrangement the coil is then pushed off the mandrel on to the bar connected with the shears, where a peculiar form of steeling allows the coil to be cut obliquely, so as to form a scarfed joint, and the link, when cut, to fall off, or to be moved. The link is then taken to the welding press, where it is closed, welded, finished, and the stud put in by pressure in metal dies. The violent exertion of welding with heavy sledge hammers, producing an intermittent and uncertain concussion so injurious to the fiber of the iron, is done away with, and an instantaneous pressure over the whole surface of the joint is substituted. The superiority of this system of manufacture seems to be palpable; the saving effected in labor is from 50 to 75 per cent. The inventor is Mr. George Homfray, of Hales Owen.—*The Ironmonger.*

Important to Southern Inventors.

Secretary Harlan has issued the following instructions to the Hon. Thomas C. Theaker, Commissioner of Patents:—

"The subject of granting patents to the citizens of States recently in rebellion has been submitted to the President, and I am instructed by him to direct that no patent be granted to any resident of a district declared by the President to be in a state of rebellion without satisfactory proof of loyalty is furnished, embracing the original or an authenticated copy of the amnesty oath as taken by said resident; and if parties making application for patents belong to the excluded class, evidence of their special pardons by the President should be furnished.

JAS. HARLAN, Sec'y of Interior Department."

An extensive coal field has just been discovered at the foot of Mount Olympus. The coal is said to be well adapted to steam purposes, and is so abundant that it can be sold for \$2 per ton. It is intended to establish a depot of the coal at Suez for the supply of the steamers.

By the spectrum analysis Bunsen was able to detect the 70,000,000th part of a grain of lithium in a compound; while of sodium the 180,000,000th part of a grain could be made perceptible.