

Scientific American.

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American Cotton is King.

Almost every regular mail arrival from Europe furnishes information of meetings held, or measures taken, for an increased supply of cotton, and an extension of its cultivation in other regions than those whence the largest supplies are now obtained. Just previous to the late monetary panic, cotton had attained to such a high price that British manufacturers of coarse goods found themselves compelled to curtail their operations, and as a consequence, they were greatly incited to devise some other means for securing a larger supply at lower prices. Being dependent on the United States for four-fifths of that which they use, they felt that American cotton was their king, hence they looked to other regions for relief. The city of Manchester being the metropolis of the cotton trade, it has always been the most active in endeavors to widen the sources of its supply, so that its manufacturers should not be entirely under the sceptre, as they now are, of the American monarch. They had for quite a number of years contributed large sums for developing the cotton culture in Hindostan; and Americans experienced in all the processes of its development—from planting the seed until it was baled for market—were employed to teach the natives, and establish its cultivation upon an extensive, economical and permanent basis. These efforts, in their most flattering aspect, never encroached on the power of the American Cotton King; in fact, they proved almost abortive; and the late rebellion in the East Indies has shut out all prospects of relief from the effeminate cotton raisers of Bombay and Bengal.

The cotton fields of India, instead of looking white, as was at one time anticipated, are now dark and desolate; but it would seem that the hopes of English manufacturers, though cast down, are not destroyed. With that remarkable tenacity of pursuing a desired object under all difficulties, for which Uncle John is so much distinguished, he has turned his thoughts and eyes from India, and now fixes them upon Africa. The region of Abeokutah seems to attract the attention of the English cotton interest at present. Considerable quantities of tolerable cotton have been raised there and imported to Liverpool; and the natives have been stimulated in various ways to devote themselves to its cultivation. It might have been supposed that as the price of cotton at present is quite low, in comparison with what it was a year ago, the ardor of the "Cotton Supply Association" in Manchester would have been somewhat cooled in reference to efforts to render themselves independent of the American planters; such, however, is not the case. On the 9th of last month (April), a very large meeting of the society was held, and resolutions adopted, amid much applause, to extend the organization, with a view to more wide-spread and vigorous efforts. The late expedition fitted out with the famous Dr. Livingstone as its chief, has for one of its main objects the encouragement of cotton cultivation in Africa. It is intended to establish various trading stations, and induce the natives to practice agriculture, and the raising of useful native products for foreign export. There are on that continent, it is asserted, tracts of country thousands of miles in extent, on which the best qualities of short staple could be raised and sold at a cost far below American cotton. The attempt, therefore, is to be made to carry the war against American King Cotton into Africa; with what success the future alone can truly determine.

When flax cotton was first made by Chevalier Claussen's process, great things were expected from it, and among others it was to supersede cotton; but that speculation has not

yet dethroned the Cotton King. India, it was also stated, was to break his sceptre, but that speculation has ended in failure also; and so we think will be the case with Africa. The culture of cotton in America is conducted with so much scientific and practical skill, and our inventors are so diligent in endeavors to improve the machines employed in every branch of its manipulation, that we have no doubt but for a great number of years to come, at least, America will be "Cotton King."

Employment for our Poor in the West.

We have often had occasion to deplore the feeble support given by the wealthy classes to the philanthropic efforts of those who have made it their special mission to provide homes and employment in the western States for the worthy and industrious artisans, boys and girls of our commercial and manufacturing towns, who have been thrown out of work by the late financial crisis. There are many in this city now languishing upon the bounty of the public, or barely supporting a miserable existence on wages totally inadequate to the supply of the most pressing demands of nature, whose labor is wanted in healthy and flourishing villages, towns and farms in the West, where their presence would be welcomed, and a liberal return made for their labor, but who are prevented from going by the want of means. There is again another class, whose friends would advance the necessary means for their deportation, and who would willingly go, did they have the proper assurances of success after reaching there. Why then cannot the societies already in existence be increased and backed by the necessary means to establish agencies at the points where labor is required, and advance to the deserving, upon proper security, the necessary means to transfer them to the scene of their labors? The security of this advance would be mainly upon the individual responsibility of the recipient, it is true, and in many cases would be worthless; but we believe that such an understanding could be generally had with the employers and employes as would insure its return at a future period. If such a system were properly carried out, a large amount of misery would be relieved, and a proper encouragement given to the commendable efforts of many a worthy and industrious person.

Although the late distresses and sufferings have experienced some diminution, our trade and manufactures are yet suffering under the most grievous losses and embarrassments; and anxiety, dejection and want are depicted upon the countenances of many of the unemployed in our midst. We shudder to think of the large number that have been diverted from the true path by grim want and sorrow. Want of employment by the head and other members of a family, too often involves the neglect and total ruin of the younger dependent members of the household; and a heavy responsibility presses upon us all, in view of the sore afflictions and enticing temptations daily experienced by this class of fellow creatures. There are many females among them possessing the sterling virtue, industry, and charms of person and mind, to beautify and make sacred any western home in which their sphere of action may be cast, who simply need a helping hand to assist them in fulfilling their legitimate mission, and prevent them from entering the golden gate of misery and ruin ever glittering before them in large cities. It is indeed to be regretted that the delightful visions of youth—the days made sacred by truth and virtue—should be embittered by such means, when the accomplishment of the most ardent virtuous aspirations are almost within the grasp. We sincerely trust that the praiseworthy disinterested zeal of those good men and women who have embarked in this noble enterprise will be increased, until all the worthy poor children of both sexes, and many of the adults, shall be transferred to the picturesque and healthy portions of the great West, where their industry will be rewarded and appreciated, and principles of virtue and wisdom will be pro-

pounded, away from scenes whose contaminating influence is but too evident from the fatal consequences which have attended their direliction.

Why we Oppose the Extension of Patents.

MESSRS. EDITORS—I have noticed from time to time that you have taken very strong ground against the extension of certain patents by act of Congress, and I am at a loss to know how you can reconcile this opposition with your professions of regard for the rights and interests of inventors. You do not pretend to deny that McCormick, Colt, Goodyear, Chaffee, and Sickles are ingenious men, and that they are the original inventors of what they have respectively patented. Now why in the name of right and justice are they not entitled to all the protection that they have solicited? W.

[In the first place, we are opposed to the extension of patents by Congress on the grounds of national policy and public morals. The chief parliament of a nation should seldom, if ever, be engaged in legislating for private parties and personal bills. Such bills, upon the sound principles of political ethics, should be left to the operation of general laws. Partial legislation ever has been—and ever will be—attended by corruption in every country where it has been practised. Those who seek for favors of this character never scruple to employ the most plausible means to gain their objects. They may not, and dare not, openly hold out the glittering bribe; but the feast and the present, and the power and influence of flattery are always brought to bear upon those whose favor is sought to be secured. When this same Colt's patent was previously before Congress, in 1855, for its extension, it was made evident that the most insidious influences were brought to bear upon Members to get the bill passed. It may be said: "Our Members of Congress are honorable men and above pollution by such temptations." This may be; but until they place themselves beyond the reach of such influences and temptations, they never will be above suspicion. The ancient republic of Athens—once the purest and most noble on the face of the earth—sunk into a mass of bloated corruption by the perversion of legislation to private ends instead of public benefits. Her history speaks to us in a voice of warning.

We also consider it wrong for Congress to legislate upon private bills, such as the extension of patents, when there is a general law in existence to meet all cases that are properly the subjects of its protecting power. Our present patent law provides for the extension of patents for seven years after the expiration of the first term, when the patentees are not sufficiently remunerated. The term of fourteen years, we consider, is sufficiently long to permit patentees generally to obtain a respectable remuneration, under a circumspect management of their business. When patents are allowed to exist for a longer term, they tend, in many cases, to retard improvements and defeat the very objects for which the patent laws were enacted. A patented invention may be admirable in principle, but its manufacture may be confined to certain parties who make very inferior articles. When it becomes public property, and not till then, the public begin to obtain the benefits which should flow from it. By the competition engendered in its general manufacture, a manifest improvement, both in the materials employed and in the mechanical details of its construction, is the inevitable result.

We do not deny that the inventions of the patentees mentioned by our correspondent were original and useful—indeed vastly so—but why should partial legislation be employed for them any more than for other equally meritorious inventors, or for all other American inventors, whatever? The same reasons advanced in favor of one can be presented in favor of all. If Congress takes up the private bill of one patentee whose patent has expired, in order to extend it as a question of "right and justice," then, upon the very same principles, a retro-

spective bill should be passed, extending every expired patent. Is Colt, or Goodyear, or Chaffee, or Sickles made up of any better clay than hundreds of other patentees whose patents have expired without being extended?

But we have been opposed to nearly all those patents sought to be extended by Congress during the past few years, because the parties seeking the extensions had nearly all become wealthy, or were so well established in a lucrative business that they did not require the extensions. Some of these patents have also cost the country an enormous amount of money. The Colt case has been before Congress since 1855; and although defeated, and thrust out again and again, it has impudently returned to the attack, and has employed no stinted means to secure its object. There are 296 Members of Congress, and it is fair to presume that, with the time spent in committees and in Congressional sessions on these private bills, they (the bills) have cost the country at least half a million of dollars. The people have become disgusted with such schemes; they tend to engender a prejudice against inventors as being a selfish class, whereas, nothing can be further from the truth in regard to their character generally.

We have a duty to perform to inventors and the public; and the position we have taken in reference to the extension of patents by Congress is intended to benefit both. If we were to consult personal considerations alone, we should pursue a different course in reference to some of the cases herein spoken of. Our independent course upon certain patent extension cases has cost us some profitable friendships, and may cost us still more; but we cannot be deterred from doing our duty by any such considerations.

The Infected Ship.

On the 15th of last month the U. S. steam frigate *Susquehanna* arrived at this port from Aspinwall, with 155 cases of yellow fever on board, having landed 85 sick men at Kingston, Jamaica, and having lost 17. Her crew was landed at Quarantine, and by order of the authorities, the ship was sent down to the lower bay, there to wait until some plan was decided upon for ventilating and disinfecting the hold, in which the disease, malaria, or whatever yellow fever is, seemed chiefly to be located. There she lies now, of no use, and may perhaps be the nest egg of an epidemic, while doctors, officials, and the public are saying with the novelist, "What shall we do with it?"

Gentlemen in the daily papers have proposed a voyage to the Arctic regions, but without calculating the expense of towing her there and back; and it has been proposed to fill the ship with ice and salt, and by creating an artificial atmosphere of intense cold, so to disinfect the ship; this we are inclined to think is a practicable idea. There is, however, a quantity of machinery in her, and the preservation of that has also to be considered, for if that is to be foolishly sacrificed, she might be sunk for a week and then raised. For our own part, we are inclined to think that air heated by passing through a furnace or boiler and then mixed with chlorine gas, and forced into the hold at a pressure by a pump or fan blast, to act as a ventilating current, would do the work, but we would like to receive suggestions from our correspondents in regard to some cheap and practical method for driving out and conquering the dreadful monster, yellow fever.

India Rubber Extension Cases.

The Washington correspondent of the *New York Herald*, under date of the 26th ult., says that "the Senate Patent Committee had up this morning for consideration the Heywood india-rubber application for renewal of patent; also the Chaffee application. The committee are unfavorably disposed to recommending any renewals, and will in this respect conform to the action of the House Patent Committee. Thus, the applications for renewals of patents—some twenty in number—may be regarded as dead for this Congress."